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SECOND SERIES

OF

PRACTICAL SERMONS

FOR

ALL THE SUNDAYS

OF THE YEAR.

BY THE REV. JOHN PERRY.

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PREFACE.

This present Volume of "PRACTICAL SERMONS FOR ALL THE SUNDAYS OF THE YEAR" is called the "*Second Series*," not because it has any connection with the Volume previously published ; but because, like that previous Volume, it contains a Sermon for every Sunday throughout the Year ; omitting however all the Holidays of Obligation, except Christmas-Day. In other respects, the Preface to the *First Series* is intended to apply equally to *this*.



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PRACTICAL SERMONS

FOR ALL THE

SUNDAYS OF THE YEAR.

SERMON I.

The First Sunday of Advent.

ON THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

And There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, ^{with perplexity} men ^{and} withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world."
(Luke, xxi. 25, 26.)

The Gospel of the present Sunday has reference to that last and terrible day, of which our Blessed Redeemer has given us a short but clear description, in the 25th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew; where he says: "And when the Son of Man shall come in his Majesty, and all the Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his Majesty; and all nations shall be gathered together before him;

and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats ; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand : Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say to them also that shall be on his left hand : Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go into everlasting punishment ; but the just into life everlasting."

How clearly do these words of our Blessed Lord describe to us that awful event to which they refer ! They place us beforehand, in imagination, on the spot, where all mankind, from the first parent of the human race, to the very last of his posterity, shall be summoned before the judgment-seat of a just and all-seeing God, to receive from him the sentence, which is to decide their lot for eternity.

That we, my Brethren, may have no reason then to fear the sentence of condemnation, let us now anticipate that day of universal terror ; and, following the order traced out for us in the description given by our Blessed Redeemer, let us consider attentively the awful transactions of that last and decisive day.

POINT I.
The general
destruction.

When the fulness of time is come ;
and the designs of the Almighty in
the creation and preservation of the

world are accomplished ; when the number of God's Elect is completed ; and the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place ; then will this present order of things cease to exist, and the whole frame of the universe be dissolved ! Let us, my Brethren, imagine we behold the disorder and confusion that will reign amidst this universal wreck of nature ; that we behold the sun blotted out from the firmament of heaven, as if shrinking from the presence of his Creator ; the moon become red as blood, thereby foretelling to the affrighted world the approaching destruction of all earthly things ; and the stars, that now decorate the heavens, quit their wonted stations ; that we hear terrific peals of thunder incessantly resounding through the skies, whilst the forked lightnings are continually darting their electric flames from one extremity of the heavens to the other ; that we feel the earth, agitated by violent and continued earthquakes, rock to its very centre, throwing prostrate in ruins, alike the stately mansions of the great, and the lowly cottages of the poor ; in fine, that we see the cataracts of heaven open, and torrents of devouring flames pouring down, in vast profusion, upon the earth ; and consuming, in one universal conflagration, whatever has hitherto escaped destruction : let us imagine we behold all this ; and then ask ourselves, what our sentiments are with regard to all worldly greatness ? what, with regard to all those possessions and riches, which men acquire with so much eagerness, and preserve with so much care and anxiety, and, not unfrequently,

at the expense of conscience and religion? Oh! that men would reflect on this tragic end of all earthly things; and that their reflections may produce in their hearts a true contempt of all that passes away with time, and may direct their pursuits to something more real and permanent!

POINT II.

All Mankind
are summoned
to Judgment.

After this scene of confusion and universal ruin, there will be heard over the whole earth the voice of the great Archangel, proclaiming aloud this awful summons: "Arise ye dead and come to judgment!" These words, as efficacious as those by which the Almighty heretofore called the world into existence, will break asunder the strong fetters of death, will rouse all mankind from their silent tombs, and, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, will gather them together, from the four quarters of the globe, into one immense assembly, to stand before the divine tribunal, and there to await the awful and irrevocable sentence of the Almighty!

POINT III.

The coming of
Jesus Christ
as Judge.

The dead being risen, and assembled before the divine tribunal; the Son of Man, preceded by the standard of his Cross, will be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty, attended by an innumerable host of the angelic spirits. His coming then will be far more resplendent and glori-

to Mount of Transfiguration

ous, than it was on ~~(Mount Thabor)~~ more majestic and terrible, than amidst the thunderbolts of Mount Sinai !

Sinners ! you, to whom, in the midst of your iniquitous career, he so frequently stretched out the arms of his tenderness and affection, inviting you to shake off your load of iniquity, to rise from the slavery of sin, and to accept the pardon which he so bountifully offered you ; but who neglected these gracious invitations, and rejected all the proffers of his mercy—you shall behold him on this day, divested of these characters of tenderness, love, and compasssion, coming as your inexorable judge ; armed with the searching rigours of his justice—with the overwhelming terrors of his vengeance ! Then will you stand trembling and aghast ; seeking death, and death shall flee away from you ! then will you call upon the mountains and hills to fall upon you, and hide you from the terrible countenance of your approaching Judge !

But you, the just, happy imitators of your suffering Redeemer, lift up your heads and rejoice, because your redemption is at hand ! For, in your Judge, *you* will behold, not a God of vengeance, but a compassionate and merciful Redeemer—a munificent Benefactor.

POINT IV.
The separation
of Saints from
Sinners.

The Judge sitting upon the seat of his Majesty, and all nations standing together before him, “he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd

separateth the sheep from the goats ; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left." Oh ! terrible and eternal separation ! Husband for ever separated from wife ; parent from child ; brother from sister ; pastor from people ; friend from friend ! When death now snatches from us one whom we love, there is still some consolation in the hope of meeting him once more beyond the grave ; but no such hope remains for the sinner then : all ties for him are broken, save the chains of everlasting fire which bind him in eternal torments.

Then shall the father be seen to pass to the right hand, and the son to the left ; and as the unhappy son casts a last sad look on his venerable parent, in bitterness of soul he exclaims : "Fare-thee well—dear and respected parent, fare-thee well ! I shall see thy face no more—no more behold those grey hairs, which my misconduct brought down with sorrow to the grave ! O cruel separation ! and yet, how richly have I deserved it ! Where are now thy pious exhortations, thy mild reproofs, thy affectionate remonstrances ; thy good example, thy watchful cares ; thy prayers, thy tears, thy supplications in my behalf ? Ah ! wretch that I am ! I disregarded thy tears, I scoffed at thy admonitions ! Now dost thou receive the recompense of thy virtue—thou art carried to Abraham's bosom : thy hapless offspring is buried in hell !" Then shall the brother, and sister, and ^{dear} bosom friend, forced from the side of those who were endeared to them, bewail in like manner their sad fate.

But their heart-rending lamentations—all their sighs of sorrow and anguish, which, if employed now during life, would be sufficient to secure for them a place among the happy few, on the right hand of their Judge; will then be passed by unregarded, unpitied!

POINT V.

The laying open
of Consciences.

My beloved Brethren, we come now to a scene far more alarming—more distressing, than we have hitherto contemplated: I

mean, the laying open to the view of all the world the conscience of every individual of the human race! Oh! what a subject of horror—of overwhelming confusion to poor sinners! What abominations! what scenes of iniquity! what black catalogues of crime hitherto kept in the greatest secrecy, will then be laid open to public view! Not an action of our whole lives, not a desire, not even a single thought, that shall not then be made manifest: “For nothing,” says our blessed Lord, is covered, that shall not be revealed; nor hidden, that shall not be known.” (*Mt. x. 26.*)

Who can describe what will be the feelings of the wicked, at this horrifying scene? Oh! how will they wish that they had lived in humiliations and contempt, that they had forsaken all things—relations, friends, and the riches and pleasures of this life; and had devoted themselves entirely to the service of their God; how will they wish that they had regulated their lives, **not** according to the false

maxims of the world, but according to the dictates of conscience and religion?

POINT VI.

The pronouncing
of the Sentence.

We will now consider the
awful and important event,
which is to close this day of
terrors. All mankind seeing

now the true state of their consciences; standing, in most profound silence, before the divine tribunal; above them, beholding heaven welcoming the Elect to the possession of a glorious immortality; and beneath them, hell gaping wide to devour its hapless victims; the sovereign Judge, looking upon his Elect with a countenance expressive of approbation, tenderness, and love, invites them to enter into the joys of his kingdom: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world." Sweet and consoling invitation! "Come," not now, as heretofore, to embrace crosses and afflictions; not now to practise mortification and self-denials; but to enjoy the delights of the heavenly paradise, to be inebriated with the plenty of God's house, and to drink for ever of the torrent of his pleasures: Come, enter into the joys of your Lord.

Then, casting upon the reprobate the terrible frowns of his indignation, he will pronounce over them the irrevocable sentence of eternal woe: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." You were heretofore the cherished objects of my tenderest

affections, for whose sakes I even shed the last drop of my blood ; but now you shall be for ever the children of malediction—the wretched victims of mine eternal vengeance : “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire !”

Having thus contemplated this frightful scene of the events which are to characterize the great day of the Lord ; and having heard the irrevocable sentence that calls the just to the enjoyment of eternal happiness, and dooms the wicked to everlasting torments ; I cannot do better, in conclusion, than address to you the words, which Moses addressed to the children of Israel, after he had laid before them the terrible threats and consoling promises, written in the Book of the Law : “Behold I set forth in your sight this day a blessing and a curse ; a blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day ; a curse if you obey not the commandments of the Lord your God, but revolt from the way which I now show you.” (*Deut. xi. 26.*)

My Brethren, you have heard the promises and the threats—the blessing and the curse : “Come, ye blessed of my Father ;” or “Depart from me, ye cursed.” Your everlasting portion must be, either with the devil and the reprobate in hell ; or with Christ and his Saints in heaven ; and it is in your power now to choose which of the two you will have. Therefore, my Brethren, reflect, and reflect seriously ; make your choice, and act accordingly.

SERMON II.

The Second Sunday of Advent.

~~ON THE NECESSITY OF DOING PENANCE.~~

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight his paths." (Mat. iii. 3.)

To "prepare the way of the Lord"—to dispose the hearts of men for the coming of their Redeemer—to teach them the dispositions with which they were to receive him; such was the important office committed to St. John the Baptist.

And how, my Brethren, did he execute his important mission? what means did he teach men to employ, in order to "flee from the wrath to come;" and to receive the blessings of their approaching Redemption? The great means which he insisted upon was penance; this was the usual subject of his discourses.

"And in those days, says the Evangelist, came John the Baptist, preaching in the desert of Judea,

and saying : ^{Repent} ~~Do penance~~ ; for the kingdom of God is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by Isaias the Prophet, saying : A voice of one crying in the desert : prepare ye the way of the Lord ; make straight his paths. Bring forth, therefore, fruit (he said) worthy of ~~penance~~. For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees ; every tree, therefore, that doth not bring forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire." (*Mt. iii.*)

At this time of Advent, the Church makes frequent use of the same language, to induce *you* also to flee "from the wrath to come." She, therefore, now says to you, as the Baptist did to the Jews : ~~"Do penance ; for the kingdom of God is at hand."~~

In the present state of corrupt nature, ~~penance~~ is necessary for us all ; even the just are not exempted from it. For "except you ~~do penance~~, you shall all likewise perish." (*Lk. xiii. 3, 5.*)

By "doing penance," I wish you to understand : voluntary punishments inflicted upon yourselves, in the spirit of ~~penance~~ ; and suffering, in the same spirit, the crosses and afflictions sent you by Providence, if you do this from a sincere detestation of sin, and with a fixed resolution of never committing it again.

If man had never sinned, then ~~doing penance~~ would not have been necessary ; there could have been no need of atonement ; but no sooner had our First Parents fallen off from God by committing sin, than ~~penance~~ became necessary for the whole human race. We must all of us ~~do penance~~, to

heal the wounds which sin has inflicted on the soul ; —to satisfy the justice of God for every sin we commit, even after the guilt has been pardoned ;—and also as a preservative against future sins.

POINT I.

In the first place, then, ^{re}pen-

~~No penance, to~~
~~heal the wounds~~
~~of the soul.~~

tance is necessary to repair the dreadful ravages which sin has produced in the soul. As sin inflicts spiritual death, so ^{re}pen-

tance is the remedy to restore spiritual life ; it will reconcile us with our offended God,—it will rescue us from his threatened chastisements,—and reopen to us the gates of heaven, which our sins keep closed against us, until full atonement has been made for them to the justice of God: “ Unless you ~~do penance,~~ ^{repent} you shall all likewise perish.” (*Lk. xiii. 3, 5.*)

But if, with sorrow, the sinner lays open his guilt ~~in the Sacrament of Penance,~~ and if he does ~~penance~~ ^{repent} for his sins, the divine promises assure him of forgiveness. For, to every repenting sinner God promises, saying : “ Turn ye ^{ye} to me, and I will turn to you, saith the Lord of Hosts.” (*Zach. i. 3.*) “ The soul that sinneth, ~~the same~~ ^{it} shall die ; but if the wicked ~~do penance~~ for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep ~~my commandments,~~ ^{the Lord's} living ~~he shall live, and shall not die.~~ ” (*Ezech. xviii. 20, 21.*)

How consoling to the sinner are these words, which, while they show the necessity of ~~penance,~~ ^{repentance}, show, at the same time, its efficacy in obtaining pardon from the God against whom we have sin-

will turn from all his sins but he shall con-

ned! Of this truth we have a striking example in the Ninivites. Almighty God, provoked by their multiplied crimes, had threatened to destroy their city. The guilty inhabitants betook themselves to ~~works of penance~~—at the preaching of Jonas they ~~did penance~~ in sackcloth and ashes; and by this means they appeased the anger of God, and averted the severe judgments which he had denounced against them.

But, notwithstanding the efficacy and necessity of ~~penance~~^{repentance}, how few there are who lead a penitential life! Do you, at least, my Brethren, have recourse to this saving remedy: "Delay not to be converted to the Lord your God, and put it not off from day to day; lest his wrath come on a sudden, and in the day of vengeance he destroy you." (*Ecclus. v. 8.*)

POINT II.
~~Do penance,~~
to atone for
past sins.

In the second place, ~~penance~~^{repentance} is
a necessary means of satisfying the
justice of God—of atoning for
the outrage offered to him by sin;
I mean, of atoning for the injury

and ~~temporal~~ punishment, which often remains due
after the guilt has been forgiven.

As God is our Creator, and our sovereign Lord, from whom we have received our existence, all our actions ought to be so many acts of homage, whereby we should testify our submission to his law.

Now, instead of this, by sin we transfer to creatures the homage which belongs to God alone, and we are thereby guilty of the greatest injustice. And

will not God, who requires us to repair the injuries done to one another, demand satisfaction for those committed against himself? Will he not require the sinner to be punished, either here ~~by his own voluntary works of penance~~, or hereafter by those chastisements which divine justice has prepared for sinners in the next life? One or the other must necessarily be suffered by every sinner—either ~~penance~~ in this world, or the chastisements of God in the next; and the choice is left to ourselves.

Oh! admire then the excess of that infinite mercy, ~~which thus puts our cause into our own hands!~~ If we now ~~do what we can in punishing ourselves~~, then he will not punish us; his justice will be satisfied. And yet, all that we can do is nothing to what our sins deserve; it is nothing, when compared with that terrible weight of vengeance which will overwhelm those sinners, who fall into the hands of the living God, before they have made atonement for their sins. For “who knoweth the power of thine anger, O Lord; or, for fear, can number thy wrath?” (*Ps. lxxxix. 11.*)

What comparison can there be between ~~the slight penances of this life, and the devouring flames of the next?~~ between the sighs of a contrite heart, and that torrent of tears which anguish will cause to flow—those bitter torments which will excruciate the guilty soul—that gnawing worm of conscience—that fire, enkindled by God’s omnipotent anger? And yet, those sighs of sorrow, ~~that penance, those works performed in a spirit of penance, are able to~~

disarm the anger of God, and to obtain a complete remission of all that we owe to his justice.

Are you not, then, foolish in the extreme, and cruel to yourselves, if you neglect so easy and so sure a means of escaping the divine judgments?

POINT III.

~~Do penance as a preservative against sin.~~

But, in the third place, even if you were of the number of the just, who have preserved their baptismal innocence; or if, after sin, you had recovered your innocence so far as to have nothing to atone for; still you would not be exempt from the obligation of ~~doing~~ works of penance, because, in the present corrupt state of human nature, ~~penance~~ is a necessary preservative against sin. Therefore, my Brethren, lay the axe to the root, by mortifying your passions.

For thereby, you will not only be satisfying the justice of God for your past sins, but you will also be taking a necessary and very powerful means of avoiding sin in future.

The great cause of our sins is concupiscence: "For every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence, and allured." (*James. i. 14.*) This is that "sting of the flesh," from the dangers of which St. Paul prayed to be delivered (*2 Cor. xii. 7*); it is a fire that is never extinguished, but is always ready to burst out into a flame, unless its violence be kept down by penitential tears—unless the body be subdued by ~~works of penance~~: "If thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies." (*Ecclus. xviii. 31.*) *Apoc.^a*

What is the reason why so many Christians yield to their passions? Is it not because they will not mortify them? Instead of offering violence to corrupt nature—instead of crucifying the flesh with its vices and concupiscences, they cherish these domestic enemies by indulging them; and therefore their passions become unruly, the flesh rebels against the spirit, and they fall a prey to temptation. ~~With what reason, therefore, does the Council of Trent declare, that~~ *“the life of a Christian is a continual penance!”*

This is what St. Paul teaches us by his example: “I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away.” (1 Cor. ix. 27.)

And this has been the practice of the Saints in every age. They were seen to afflict their bodies, to mortify the deeds of the flesh, and to offer themselves living sacrifices to God, by making themselves victims of penance.

But alas! instead of imitating them, do you not imagine that a penitential life belongs only to monasteries and convents? As if ~~penance~~ were not more necessary for those who live in the midst of a corrupt world, than for those who have retired from it. And let it not be said, that your situation in society, or your constitution, will not allow you to ~~perform works of penance~~; for every one can and must ~~do penance~~ in some way or other; for there are many ways of ~~doing penance~~ which genuine piety and sincere repentance will not fail to suggest.

But, ~~in doing works of penance~~, take care, my Brethren, to cherish a real hatred of sin, and sorrow for having committed it, with a sincere determination that you will never commit it again ; and to accompany all your penitential works with frequent acts of contrition.

By so doing, you will daily purify your soul more and more from sin, and from the ~~debt of temporal~~ punishment due to it, so as to be prepared, at the end of your life, to pass from ~~the voluntary mortifications, and penances of~~ this world, to enjoy the rewards prepared for you in heaven.

SERMON III.

The Third Sunday of Advent.

ON AN IMMEDIATE AND SINCERE REPENTANCE.

*"I am the Voice of one crying in the wilderness :
Make straight the way of the Lord."* (John i. 23.)

By repeating these words of the Baptist, during this time of Advent, the Church continues to remind us of the dispositions necessary for celebrating in a proper manner the approaching Festival of our Lord's Nativity. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord (she says) ; make straight his paths. ~~Do~~ penance, therefore, for the kingdom of God is at hand." Hasten "to flee from the wrath to come." "For the axe is already laid to the root of the trees ; every tree therefore that doth not bring forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire." Hasten, then, to "bring forth good fruit—fruit worthy of ^{re}penance ;" lest, otherwise, you should be "cut down, and cast into everlasting fire." (*Matt. iii.*)

To avoid so terrible an effect of the divine vengeance, no means are more effectual, and more necessary, than repentance.

Your last hour is advancing ; it is perhaps much nearer than you imagine ; delay not therefore the necessary work of repentance, for to-morrow may be too late. It is on the necessity of thus repenting without delay, that I will now in the first place address you, and then I will show that your repentance, in order to be effectual, must be such, as to work a real change of heart and amendment of life.

POINT I.

The necessity
of immediate
repentance.

Your repentance, then, must be without delay : it is the greatest folly to put it off. Yet alas ! this is what the greater part of mankind do : they continue in sin, that they may enjoy the gratification of sinning ; hoping that God will give them the opportunity and the grace of repenting hereafter.

Oh ! my Brethren, do not deceive yourselves with the design of repenting at some future period of your life. For, if you thus despise God's goodness, and reject his mercy now that he calls you to repentance ; he will, in his turn, reject you. Listen to his threats against unrepenting sinners : " Because I called, and you refused ; because I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded : I also will laugh in your destruction ; and will mock, when that shall come upon you which you feared." (*Prov.* i. 24.) Let impenitent sinners bear in mind what

Jesus Christ declared to the impenitent Jews :
 " You shall seek me, and shall not find me ; and you shall die in your sins." (*John* vii. 34 ; viii. 21.)

For the number of your days is not at your own disposal. God holds in his hand the thread of your life, which you are provoking him to break. And, if he does break it, you will be, that very moment, the victims of his vengeance. And where then will be your projects of future repentance ?

But should God give you the time to execute those delusive projects, have you any assurance that he will give you the necessary grace ? " Because I called, and you refused ; because I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded ; I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come upon you which you feared. You shall then call upon me, and I will not hear." (*Prov.* i.) " Thus saith the Lord God : Now is ^{the} ~~an~~ end come upon thee ; and I will send ^{mine anger} ~~my wrath~~ upon thee ; ^I will judge thee according to thy ways ; and ^{recompense} ~~will set~~ all ^{upon thee} ~~thy~~ abominations against thee : mine eye shall not spare thee ; and I will show thee no pity." (*Ezech.* vii. 3.)

Again, he saith : " I also will deal with them in my wrath : mine eye shall not spare them, neither will I show mercy : and when they shall cry to my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them." (*Ezech.* viii. 18.)

But should God give you both sufficient time and grace for repenting, can you depend upon your own correspondence ? If you find the work of repentance

and amendment too difficult for you now, will it not be more so hereafter? For you increase the difficulty, by every delay, on account of the habit of sin which you thereby strengthen. For one sin draws on another: a habit of sin is soon acquired, and daily strengthened; and thus formed and strengthened, it becomes a second nature. In this state of habit the sinner forms, indeed, desires of repentance and amendment; but he defers their execution: he continues to form these desires to the end of his life; but still, even then, he does not fulfil them; and thus he is hurried before God, with his sins unrepented of; and without having anything to plead in his favour, but mere desires of a future repentance. Therefore, my Brethren, put your resolutions in practice now that God calls upon you to do so—now that he offers you his grace for that purpose.

And be not prevented by the delusive suggestions of the enemy; or by supposed difficulties. It is common for delaying sinners to imagine, that, when such or such an affair is ended, they can better attend to the work of repentance than they can at present; but does not experience show that they deceive themselves by such ideas? for that another and greater difficulty always comes on; and thus you will never think you are sufficiently at leisure for applying to the work of repentance; and yet, of all your affairs, it is that very one which is of the greatest importance to you; because it is the one upon which your all depends for eternity.

There are many who imagine, that age and satiety will render repentance less difficult. But, after a life of sin, when your heart is hardened in iniquities, are you likely to be better disposed then, than you are now? Did age and satiety reform the heart of Saul and Solomon? did age and criminal indulgences render the wicked Achab, or Jezabel, or Herodias less bent upon evil? Was it not then, that their passions arrived at the highest pitch—that they filled up the measure of their iniquities? So it will be with you, if, instead of repenting, and amending your life, you will go on in your habit of sin. “For, what a man sows, the same shall he reap.” (*Gal. vi. 8.*)

Therefore, my Brethren, repent—repent now that God gives you the time and opportunity. But let it be done in the sincerity of your hearts—let your repentance be sincere; for this is a necessary quality of true repentance, to which I now call your attention.

POINT II.

The necessity of a real change of heart & conduct.

Repentance, to be sincere, must be such as to work a real change of heart, and a reformation of your conduct. These are two essential conditions, which St. Paul teaches when he says: “Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put ye on the new man.” (*Eph. iv. 23.*)

This change of heart is what God requires of every sinner: “Be converted to me, he says, with

all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning: and rend your hearts, and not your garments." (*Joel* ii. 12.) Hereby you will cut off sin in its very source; for its malice, as our Lord tell us, proceeds from the heart. Hence, there can be no true repentance, unless the heart be changed—unless it hate sin, which it has hitherto loved.

If the heart be thus changed, it will, as a necessary consequence, show itself in the amendment of your lives: "Vain, says Tertullian, is your repentance, if there be no change in your conduct."

After your repentance, therefore, (if it be true and sincere,) you will be seen labouring to make satisfaction to your offended God, by bringing forth fruits worthy of ~~penance~~—by renouncing your sins and the occasions of them, and discharging faithfully all the duties of your state of life: "As you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity; so now you will (be seen to) yield your members to serve justice, unto sanctification." (*Rom.* vi. 19.) If hitherto you have lived "according to the flesh;" you must now, "by the spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh" (*Rom.* viii. 13)—~~by voluntary austerities, and, by suitable works of penance,~~ you must "crucify the flesh, with its vices and concupiscences." (*Gal.* v. 24.)

This is not a matter of mere counsel, but of necessity: For those passions, which you have indulged, will soon recover their strength, and become as violent as ever, unless you take care to keep them

in subjection. Unless you act thus, you will enjoy neither peace nor consolation in your new life.

A change of life consists, not merely in repenting of your past disorders, but in accompanying your repentance with suitable acts of atonement. This is indispensable ; and not so difficult, as is generally imagined. For the grace of God will assist you ; and the spiritual consolations which he will communicate to your soul, will sweeten all the bitterness of a penitential life : “ Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened ; and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and you shall find rest for your souls ; for my yoke is sweet, and my burden light.” (*Mt. xi. 28.*)

Oh ! yield, my Brethren, to this encouraging invitation of your Saviour ; and then, instead of that gloom, that anxiety and remorse, which attend a life of sin, your souls will overflow with the pure delights of innocence and peace, which will convert even your very penance into pleasure, and will give you a kind of foretaste of that eternal happiness, which is prepared in heaven for all those who become and continue true penitents on earth.

SERMON IV.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent.

ON THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD.

“And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”
(Luke iii. 6.)

During this time of Advent, the Church has been exhorting you to prepare yourselves for that solemn Festival, wherein she celebrates the Nativity of the world's Redeemer. This is the great object which she has been proposing to your consideration for the last three weeks, and to which she still continues to direct your attention. It is of that first appearance of Jesus Christ amongst us, that St. John the Baptist speaks, when he says: “And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

But it was by means of the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, that we received that manifestation of the divine mercy towards us. Let us therefore contemplate that saving mystery,

for the purpose of learning therefrom the excess of God's love towards fallen man, and what ought to be our love towards him in return.

POINT I.

The tenderness
and the extent of
God's love for
man.

Enter then into that abyss of charity, which our loving Redeemer has displayed towards all men in the mystery of his Incarnation. For it is in this mystery of love, that "the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour hath appeared." (*Tit.* iii. 4.) The greatness of the evils from which he has delivered us, by showing how he compassionated our miseries, proves the tenderness of his love; and the dear rate at which he has purchased that deliverance, proves its extent.

1. In order to see the tenderness of charity, which our Lord has exercised towards us in his Incarnation, we must recall to mind the lamentable state to which sin had reduced us, and in which we must have still remained, if he had not come to redeem us. When our first parents in paradise transgressed the divine command, by eating the forbidden fruit, that crime not only deprived them of original justice, but was the cause also of our miseries. They had closed the gates of heaven both against themselves, and against all their posterity. In consequence of that sin, we are all born children of wrath, slaves of the devil, and subject to eternal banishment from God.

Such is the deep wound inflicted by sin, to which

we all become victims even at the very first moment of our existence: and this it was that the eternal Son of God came upon earth to cure. He clothed himself with our human nature, that he might "wash away our sins in his own blood." (*Apoc.* i. 5.) What an excess of overflowing goodness,—of the tenderest love! For, what must have become of us for all eternity, unless God, compassionating our misery, had hastened to our relief? We had forfeited our title to the kingdom of heaven, and of ourselves we could never have recovered it; but must have been excluded for ever from that blissful kingdom, and condemned to suffer eternal torments in the flames of hell. How lamentable, then, was the condition to which man was reduced by sin! and how great was the tenderness of God's love, who would not leave us to perish without resource, but, looking down with compassion upon our miseries, "hath visited and wrought the Redemption of his people!" (*Lk.* i. 68.)

Such are the happy effects of that tender love of compassion, which moved him to accomplish this great mystery, in order to deliver us from our misery by purchasing our Redemption.

2. When the time, appointed by his wisdom, was come, God sent down his only-begotten Son into the world, "to be a propitiation for our sins." (1 *John* iv. 10.) And that adorable Son, to accomplish the work of mercy for which he was sent, "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man: he humbled

himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross." (*Philip. ii. 7, 8.*) Oh! how clearly do we discover herein the infinite extent of God's love towards man!

Without an adequate atonement, the divine justice would not have been satisfied; for that justice required an atonement equal to the offence. But all mankind, together with the angelic spirits, mere creatures, were not capable of making such an atonement. No less than a divine Person could fully satisfy the injured justice of God; because it was only such a Person that could give an infinite value to his merits. Consequently, we must have remained for ever debtors to the divine justice, had not the Son of God mercifully taken our cause into his own hands, and made for us the necessary reparation, which we ourselves were incapable of making.

And yet, as it was *man* that had sinned; and as God is, by nature, incapable of suffering, the victim for expiating sin must be possessed of human nature. But as God alone could give the required value and merit to the sufferings of man, it was necessary that the victim for sin should be both God and man at the same time: And therefore the Son of God became man, that he might be "the propitiation for our sins." (1 *John ii. 2; iv. 10.*)

This is the wonderful means, whereby the divine mercy has enabled us to discharge the immense debt which we had contracted by sin: it is by the union of the divine and human nature in the Person of Christ, that the mercy and justice of God, in

man's Redemption, have been reconciled—that “mercy and truth have met and embraced” (*Ps. lxxxiv. 11*)—that earth has been reconciled to heaven, and man restored to the friendship of God.

Could we have a greater proof of the boundless extent of God's love towards us? When he created the world, it cost him but a single word: “He spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created.” (*Ps. xxxii. 9.*) But when he redeemed man, he did it at a much dearer rate.

For this work of mercy cost the eternal Father his only-begotten Son, “in whom he is always well pleased:” “God hath sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” (*1 John iv. 10.*)

And the Son of God, from the same excess of charity, and in obedience to the will of his heavenly Father, took upon himself our iniquities, and presented himself to the divine justice a bleeding victim, that he might satisfy for our sins, and so deliver us from the punishments we deserved for them. Oh! what an excess of love! that the Son of God should become man, that he might wash away our sins in his own blood! that he should humble himself to such a degree, that he might exalt us! that he should become poor, that he might enrich our poverty! that the great Lord of heaven and earth should condescend to take the form of a servant, that he might deliver us from being slaves of the devil, and might raise us to the exalted dignity of being the children of God! Could there be a proof of tenderer or of more excessive

love? And this proof is given us in the mystery of the Incarnation. Seeing then how much God has loved us, let us now consider what ought to be our love towards him in return.

POINT II.

How we ought to love God in return.

Charity ought to be mutual. The greater the love which God has manifested towards us, the greater ought to be our love of him. "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him." (1 *John* iv. 9.) "You are not your own, says St. Paul, for you are bought with a great price." (1 *Cor.* vi. 19, 20.) Now, this immense charity, whereby our Redemption has been purchased, calls upon us most forcibly to devote ourselves entirely to the divine love and service.

When we consider what our blessed Redeemer has done for us—that he has delivered us from the greatest and worst of evils, which, but for him, must have been perpetual; and that he has delivered us from them at so dear a rate—"not with corruptible things, says St. Peter, such as gold and silver; but with his own precious blood" (1 *Pet.* i. 18); can we make these reflections, without being inflamed with an ardent desire of making him a return of gratitude and love?

We can never make him a sufficient return for the benefit of our creation. But we are infinitely more indebted to his goodness and mercy for the

still greater benefit of our Redemption. For what would it avail us to have been born, says St. Ambrose, if we had not also been redeemed? what advantage would it have been to have received our natural life, as children of wrath, if we could not have received also the life of grace, whereby we might be made the children of God, and heirs of his heavenly kingdom? Oh! what a return of gratitude and love do we owe to our God for this merciful effect of his loving goodness! Let us never forget so inestimable a blessing, but make it the frequent subject of our grateful reflections.

If we could but form a just estimate of the tenderness and extent of charity with which God has loved us, we should never lose sight of it from our mind; but should be constantly endeavouring to return love for love to a God, who has made such immense sacrifices for the love of us; and we should be always striving to sacrifice our whole selves to him, by a perfect obedience to his will. This is the return which he expects from us. For, as he has given himself for our Redemption, he requires that we should give ourselves entirely to his love—that we should withdraw our heart from the love of creatures, and consecrate all its affections to him.

And, as he came to destroy sin, and to deliver us from its eternal consequences, he requires that we should renounce this worst of evils—this object of his eternal hatred, with all the occasions that would lead us to it; he requires therefore that we should courageously resist temptations, and mortify the

corrupt inclinations of our heart. For, after God has taken such means to destroy sin; shall we suffer it still to reign in our hearts? After he has restored us to liberty, by breaking the fetters that bound us; shall we, as if unwilling to be free, deliver ourselves up to be again the slaves of the devil? After he has become obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross, and shed the last drop of his blood to atone for our sins; shall we make no atonement ourselves, by mortification, self-denials, and other works of penance? After he has humbled himself so low, in order to raise us from the love of created things to heavenly desires, shall we love to grovel upon the earth, and be slaves to earthly and carnal affections, unworthy of a soul that is made for God? No, my Brethren, let us not refuse him our love, after he has purchased it at so dear a rate. Since he came upon earth to enkindle the fire of his love, let us beg of him to enkindle it in our hearts, that we may be wholly his—that we may love him alone in time and eternity.

SERMON V.

Christmas Day, at Midnight.

ON THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

"While all things were in deep silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, thy Almighty Word came down from heaven, from thy royal throne." (Wisd. xviii. 14, 15.)

POINT I. Yes, my Brethren, this was the
 The Birth hour, while the night was in the
 of Christ. midst of her course; it was during
 the solemn silence of this midnight-
 hour, that *the Almighty Word*, the eternal Son of God,
 the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, the Lord
 of Glory, and God of infinite Majesty, the Desired of
 all nations, the *Saviour of mankind*, WAS BORN into
 this world, and came to dwell amongst us! Although
 the great King of heaven and earth, at whose name
 every knee ought to bow, he comes as the outcast of
 mankind,—is rejected by his own chosen people, who

will not even afford him a shelter under their roof—they had no room *for him* ! A *poor stable*, therefore, is the place of his birth—the great God of heaven is “wrapped in swaddling clothes,” and is “laid in a manger.” (*Lk. ii. 12.*)

POINT II.
His Birth
calls for our
Adoration.

Thousands of thousands of ministering Spirits—all the Choirs of Angels and Archangels, the Cherubim and Seraphim, descending from heaven, come to adore their Lord in this humble state, and to sing to him their hymns of praise and glory : “Glory be to God on high ; and peace on earth to men of good-will.” (*Lk. ii. 14.*) That the whole Choir of heaven did so on this occasion, we learn from divine inspiration : For the Prophet Daniel, speaking of the Angels ministering to God, says, that “thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him.” (*Dan. vii. 10.*) And we are told by Saint Paul, that all these countless myriads of heavenly spirits were expressly commissioned by God to adore our blessed Redeemer on this occasion. The Apostle’s words are these : “When God brought his only-begotten Son into the world, he said : Let all the angels of God adore him.” (*Heb. i. 6.*)

At a time, then, like this, when the whole court of heaven is employed in adoring our Lord in this dispensation of his blessings to man, shall *man* alone be inactive—be wanting in his acts of devotion and

love? It would seem a reproach to us, therefore, were we too easily to dispense with ourselves from meeting together, at this holy time, to adore our Lord, and to thank him for this astonishing display of his goodness and mercy towards us. Let us, then, now, during the solemn silence of this midnight-hour, join with all these heavenly Spirits in paying our homage of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving to our new-born Saviour; let us welcome him at his Birth, *with all the ardour, and all the affection of our souls.*

POINT III.

*His Birth
calls for our
Joy.*

This we are invited to do, in the persons of the shepherds mentioned in this day's Gospel: "There were, at that time, in the same country, certain poor shepherds, watching, and keeping the night-watches over their flock. An angel of the Lord came and stood by them, and they were afraid. But the angel said to them: Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: For this day is born to you a SAVIOUR, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign to you: you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." (*Lk. ii. 8 to 12.*)

From these words of the Angel to those poor shepherds, we learn what ought to be the object of our joy, at this holy time—we should rejoice, because "this day is born to us a *Saviour*," who comes "to save his people from their sins"—one who comes to

deliver us from the slavery of sin and satan, by procuring for us mercy, grace, and salvation.

We are told by the Evangelist, that the holy Patriarch, Abraham, desired to see this day ; and that, when he saw it *in spirit only*, he “was glad.” (*John* viii. 56.) Oh ! what would have been his feelings of joy and gladness, if, like us, he had seen it, not *in spirit only*, but in its real accomplishment ! This reflection made that ardent lover of his Redeemer, the illustrious St. Bernard, say : “Very often do I consider in my mind the ardour of the desire with which the ancient Fathers sighed for the coming of Christ in the flesh : and I am filled within myself with confusion and sorrow, and even now scarce am I able to contain my tears ; so much am I ashamed of the sloth and lukewarmness of these wretched times. For, who amongst us now conceives so much joy from the presence of this grace, as the mere promise of it created desire in the ancient Saints ? Behold ! many, he says, will *rejoice*, indeed, in this festival ; but I wish it were *on account* of the festival, and not for vanity and worldly enjoyments.” (*Serm. in Cant. c. 2.*)

Let us, my Brethren, enter now into the sentiments and feelings of this illustrious Saint—let us conceive in our hearts a joy suited to this joyful festival ; and let us join, *heart and soul*, with the heavenly Choirs in the joyful hymn which they sung on this joyful occasion : “Glory be to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good will.” Let us praise and adore the boundless goodness of God,

who, by the Birth of his Son, has sent to us "justice and abundance of peace." (*Ps. lxxi. 7.*) It is a peace, however, (as we learn from this day's Gospel,) which is to be bestowed only on "men of good will." (*Lk. ii. 14.*)

"And it came to pass, after the Angels departed from them into heaven, that the shepherds said one to another : Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us." (*Lk. ii. 15.*)

My Brethren, with those shepherds, let us also go over in spirit to Bethlehem, at this holy time, and there let us pay our homage, and make our offerings to our infant Saviour. The offering, which he most of all calls for at our hands, is that of our heart : "Son, he says, give me thy heart." (*Prov. xxiii. 26.*) Oh ! let us give it, then, without reserve : let us rouse all the affections of our soul to love him with our whole heart, in return for that excessive love, which brought him down from heaven to purchase our salvation ; and let us beg of him, that he would enable us, by his grace, to regulate our conduct for the future in such manner, as that we may deserve to enjoy those abundant graces here, and those eternal blessings hereafter, which he came to purchase for us.

SERMON VI.

The Last Sunday of the Year.

ON IMITATING JESUS CHRIST, BY BEING MEEK
AND HUMBLE OF HEART.

“Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.” (Gal. iv. 6.)

Our divine Saviour was born into this world, and dwelt amongst us, not only that he might purchase our Redemption by dying for us, but also that he might set us an example for our imitation.

It is by copying his example that we are to become Saints, and save our souls: “For whom God foreknew (to be Saints,) he predestinated them to be made *conformable to the image of his Son.*” (Rom. viii. 29.) And therefore our Lord expressly proposes to us the pattern he has set us: “I have given you an example, he says, that as I have done, so you do also.” (John xiii. 15.) And that we may be led to

form our lives according to that divine pattern, "God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts;" for we cannot imitate Christ, without living by his Spirit.

And during this time of Christmas, while we are engaged in celebrating our Lord's Nativity whereby he came into this world, not only to redeem us by his death upon the Cross, but also to show us the true way to heaven both by word and example; what can be more appropriate for us, than to consider his example with the view of imitating it?

POINT I.

We have to learn & copy the example of Christ.

We profess to be his disciples—to be his imitators; but are we really so? We know we cannot be saved without imitating him: are we, then, already lost, because we have not imitated him—because we have not copied his example? "Those whom God foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son." We have not been conformable: are we, then, lost? No, my Brethren; we are yet living, and therefore we *may* become conformable to that divine image, if we will. Let us, then, begin in good earnest, and from this very moment: let us now, and in future, imitate the life of Jesus Christ, and then we shall be made partakers of his glory in heaven. Let us therefore be constantly striving to "do all things according to the pattern shown us on the mount." (*Heb. viii. 5.*)

So far we have been taking a mere general view of the necessity of imitating the example of Christ; but we must not rest satisfied with merely knowing and considering that necessity: for we *must* come to *practice* by descending to *particulars*.

In what, then, must we imitate our Lord's example? or rather, where should we *begin*? for we have to copy *all* his virtues. Christians of every state of life will find in him a pattern of all virtues; but what virtues shall we begin with? My Brethren, he himself tells us: "Learn of me," he says, (not to create the world, or to raise the dead to life; but) —"Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (*Mt. xi. 29.*) This being "meek and humble of heart" is the beginning—the foundation of all virtue. These two virtues go hand in hand: for a meek man is humble; and an humble man is meek. We may say the same of the contrary vices: for a haughty man is always proud; and a proud man is haughty. Let us, then, "learn of him to be meek and humble of heart." For, though, as St. Augustine says, his whole life upon earth is an example of every virtue, his meekness and humility of heart are what he more especially calls upon us to imitate. The excellence of these two virtues, and the need we have of them, are thus rendered evident. But even if he had not expressly told us, that these two virtues are what he particularly wishes us to imitate in him; nevertheless, in order to discover this truth, we need only consider, that the Son of God

came down from heaven to teach them, not by words only, but much more by his actions; and that his whole life was an example and living model of them. St. Basil proves this truth, by running through the whole life of Christ; and, after having recounted the principal circumstances, from his birth to his death, he shows that all his actions serve to teach us that he was "meek and humble of heart."

POINT II.

We have to learn of him to be meek.

As to *Meekness*, what is the example he has given us? The Gospel informs us how, during his whole life, he had to endure the most unrelenting persecutions and insulting outrages; and, at the close of it, the severest torments. But he bore all this unworthy treatment, not merely with patience, but with an unspeakable meekness. He could, with the least exertion of his divine power, have cast all his persecutors at once into the bottomless abyss; but he preferred rather to endure their malice, without any other resistance but that of meekness. He forgave them from his heart; and even offered himself as a victim of propitiation for them, in order to induce his heavenly Father also to forgive them. And one of his last dying words on the Cross was in favour of those very persons, who had nailed him to it: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (*Lk.* xxiii. 34.)

POINT III.

We have to
learn of him
to be humble.

As to *humility of heart*, his example is no less striking. He was the King of kings, and Lord of lords—the great God of heaven and earth, before whom the Angels and

Archangels, the Cherubim and Seraphim, fall down in silent adoration; and yet he humbled himself so far, for our example, as to be born of a poor mother, in a stable, as a stranger, and an outcast from society, to be “wrapped up in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.” He submitted to be circumcised, as a sinner,—to flee into Egypt, as one forced into exile,—to be baptized among publicans and sinners, as if he were one of them. When, afterwards, the people wished to honour him by making him their king, he hid himself from them; but when they would load him with insults and reproaches, he appeared publicly in their presence. When men praised him, and the devils, by the mouths of the possessed, published his greatness, he commanded them to be silent; but when they accused and condemned him, he gave no such command. To recommend humility to us as the act of his last will, he humbled himself at the end of his life so far, as even to wash the feet of his disciples; and crowned all these examples of humility, by voluntarily resigning himself to die the most humiliating death of the Cross.

But, why all these humiliations in the life of Christ? It was, says St. Bernard, in order that no one might dare, after that, to exalt or glorify him-

self. Man had always been extravagant in allowing himself to be carried away with vanity ; but it would now be, says the same Saint, a thing wholly insupportable, to see a worm of the earth puffing himself up with pride, after the God of infinite Majesty has thus debased himself so low for our example. The Son of God has taken the form of a servant, and chosen for himself humiliations and contempt ; and we, who are but dust and ashes, and much worse than dust and ashes, because we are sinners—we presume to seek after honour and respect, as if they were our due.

POINT IV.

But have we learnt of him to be meek and humble ?

Oh ! what a difference between our conduct, and the example of Jesus Christ, our model ! He suffered every kind of humiliation, and ill-treatment, with perfect meekness and humility of heart ; but is not the least thing sufficient to wound our pride, and make us break out into complaints and ill-humour, and even revenge ? The example of our blessed Redeemer teaches us how to reform our conduct ; let us, therefore, study his life, and learn of him henceforth to be “ meek and humble of heart.” Like him, let us be condescending, and kind, and affable to every one, but more especially to the poor and lowly ; and let us not give way to that false, mistaken, and worldly idea, that we shall thereby degrade or lower ourselves in the eyes of men. Perhaps some, indeed, may smile contemp-

tuously at our simplicity and condescension. Well, be it so ; Christ was laughed to scorn : in his condescension, meekness, and humiliations, he was contemned, despised, and laughed at. Now, "the disciple is not (or should not think of being) above his master." (*Mt.* x. 24.) "I am among you, as he that doth serve." (*Lk.* xxii. 27.) "I have given you an example, that, as I have done, so you do also." (*John* xiii. 15.)

Oh ! let us, then, keep constantly before our eyes this divine example which our Lord has set us, and which he thus proposes to us for our imitation. Whatever may be the conduct of men in our regard—however they may treat us, let us cast our eyes upon our divine Model, who left us his example that we should follow his steps. (*1 Pet.* ii. 21.) Let us, on all occasions, and under all circumstances, "learn of him to be meek and humble of heart."

SERMON VII.

The First Sunday of the New-Year.

ON TIME : THE MOTIVES, AND THE MEANS FOR
EMPLOYING IT, WELL.

"Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly; for neither work, nor wisdom shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening." (Eccles. ix. 10.)

Having now arrived at the first Sunday of a New-Year, let us not allow it to pass by, without making a firm resolution to comply with this important admonition of the Wise-Man—let us resolve to labour earnestly, during the remainder of our days, in the great affair of our salvation, by spending our time in such works as will secure us from falling hereafter into those eternal torments, to which, otherwise, we are hastening. Let us endeavour, during the present year, ~~not only~~ to repair, ~~by good works,~~ the evil deeds of the past; but to lay up, moreover, a rich store of merits for

the next life ; and let us be particularly on our guard against squandering away any portion of our remaining time in such works, as will not be conducive to our salvation. Oh ! what a melancholy reflection it will be to us, at the end of our lives, to look back upon the past, if, instead of employing our time in loving and serving Almighty God, and in securing our salvation, we spend it in doing evil : and so turn it against the God who gave it ! or if we squander in frivolous amusements, or in mere earthly pursuits, that precious time which is given us to be employed in promoting God's honour, and our own salvation !

That we, my Brethren, may not then have any cause for alarm or regret on this subject, let us be determined, that henceforth no portion of our time shall be allowed to escape, without being turned to the best advantage : and that we may give greater firmness to this determination, let us now consider the *Motives* we have to make a good use of our time ; and also the *Means* we should adopt for spending it well and profitably.

POINT I.

The motives for making a good use of our time.

1. Among the many motives which should induce us to employ our time well, the first is its inestimable value. For, it is a most precious gift of God—a gift upon which we cannot set too high a value, and the loss of which is irreparable. That time, which we are apt to esteem so little, and to squan-

der away so lavishly in vain, unprofitable, and even sinful pursuits, is far more valuable than all the treasures of gold and silver, and rich estates—than all the kingdoms of this world. For, by the good management of time, we ~~can~~ lay up treasures for eternity—we can purchase a kingdom, which shall never have an end.

If we had a true idea of time—if we knew how to estimate its value, as justly as those unhappy souls do, who are now suffering in the flames of hell; we should not need to be admonished of its value, nor exhorted to employ it well. They see now the real worth of time: but it is too late! They neglected to profit by it while they had the means and opportunity of doing so; but they lament the sad consequence of their folly, now that they are overtaken by that dismal night of eternity, “wherein no man can work.” (*John ix. 4.*)

Time is still left in our hands; yet we know not how soon that awful moment will arrive, which is to deprive us for ever of this precious treasure; and which, unless we are careful to husband well our time, will hurry us before our Judge, only to receive from him the punishment due to our negligence!

Therefore, my Brethren, from the unhappy failure of others, let us learn to set a just value on the time allowed us by Almighty God, and let us learn, moreover, to labour “earnestly,” whilst it is in our power, to lay up, by means of good works, a rich store of merits for eternity; that so, instead of being cast off and punished for our slothfulness, we may

deserve the reward which God promises to those who are diligent in his service. Our time is given us that we may employ it in promoting God's glory and our own salvation, until an account of it shall be demanded from us. Let us take care, then, that we do not, like the slothful servant, bury our talent; for, if we do, we must expect to be "cast (with him) into the exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But let us be very earnest in imitating the faithful servants who made a good and profitable use of their talents, and were consequently invited to "enter into the joys of their Lord." (*Mt. xxv. 14 to 30.*)

2. Time, which is so precious a gift, remains not long in our possession; for it is exceedingly rapid in its flight: and this is another consideration, which should make us diligent in our endeavours to employ it well.

Its course is more irresistible, than that of the raging torrent; its flight more rapid than the lightning's flash. As soon as we have well begun to tread the path of life, our career is run; and we are hurried into eternity! Our hours pass away, one after another, in rapid succession; and are swallowed up in the boundless ocean of eternity: and as many of these hours, as we suffer to pass unemployed, or misemployed, are so many irrecoverably lost. Let this consideration make us more wary and diligent in the good management of our time.

3. As a more powerful inducement to do this, let us cast our eyes towards heaven, where the Saints, who

have gone before us, are now enjoying the rewards of their good use of time. Oh! with what joy and satisfaction do they now look back on the time which they spent in the service of their Creator, in singing the praises of the Almighty, in preparing for the Sacraments, and in adoring their Saviour, during the celebration of the sacred Mysteries! They now experience, with David, how "one day spent in the courts of the Lord, is to be esteemed above thousands passed in the tents of sinners." (*Ps. lxxxiii. 11.*)

Let us, my Brethren, regulate our ideas of time, according to what theirs now are; and let us employ it henceforth in such a manner, as that we may render ourselves worthy to receive that reward for our good use of time, which they are now enjoying.

POINT II.

The manner of making a good use of our time.

But this cannot be effected, without labour and perseverance. For, the distance between us, and the mountain of perfection which we have to ascend, is very great; and the time, which we have for ascending thither, is very short. We must not, therefore, loiter; nor squander away our time in such things as are nothing to the purpose. For the day of our life will soon be passed; and that night, wherein no man can work, will come quickly upon us, and prevent us from pursuing our journey. Whilst others, then, sacrifice their time to pleasures, to amusements, to "treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath," (*Rom. ii. 5.*;) let us manage ours with diligence, and the strictest economy.

For, in due time, God will examine our works, and require a strict account of our time ; and what shall we be able to say then, if we now squander it away in idle amusements ; or if we perform our actions through mere habit, necessity, or inclination ; rather than in obedience to the will of God ; or if the faculties of our mind, and the powers of our body, are wasted solely on affairs of the present life, rather than employed in loving and serving our Creator, and saving our immortal soul ?

If we now look back upon the past year, can we say that we have employed our time well—that we have discharged the duties of our state of life faithfully,—that we have given due time to prayer, meditation, preparing for the Sacraments, and our other spiritual duties,—in fine, that we have given to God all that was due to him ? If not ; let us resolve to do so now at least ; let us endeavour to redeem the time we have already lost, by being more watchful and diligent in future,—by giving ourselves up to the performance of good works,—and by discharging faithfully all our religious duties ;—in a word, by making all the time we have remaining conducive to our eternal welfare, performing our actions with the pure intention of pleasing God. And then, when the Angel of death shall proclaim, that time for us shall be no more, we shall be prepared to receive the summons with joy ; because our days will then be full days ; and we shall be perfected in virtue, and in every good work.

SERMON VIII.

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

ON THE HIDDEN OR PRIVATE LIFE OF JESUS.

“And his Mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.” (Luke ii. 51, 52.)

As our Lord daily increased in age, so, for our example, the Evangelist tells us that he “advanced in wisdom and grace with God and men ;” because he daily gave greater evidences of knowledge and virtue, of wisdom and sanctity to all who saw him.

The consideration of his example should excite in our souls an ardent desire of advancing every day in the practice of a virtuous life, and should spur us on to the most earnest and unceasing endeavours to arrive at that perfection which belongs to our state of life. For you should remember, that not to go forward in the way of virtue is to go backward.

In order to see in our Lord's example how you are to advance daily in the practice of a virtuous life, place him now before your eyes ; imagine you behold that divine Saviour, who passed for the son

of Joseph the Carpenter, leading a retired and holy life in the practice of every virtue, during the years he spent at Nazareth, till he was thirty years of age ; working no miracles, nor giving any of those special proofs of his Divinity, which he so frequently gave afterwards during the three years of his public ministry, but employing himself in ^{probably} manual labour, by working at the humble trade of a carpenter ; and showing at all times, and on all occasions, the most perfect obedience and subjection, to his ~~Blessed~~ ^{reputable} Virgin Mother, and St. Joseph.

POINT I.

Jesus gives us an example of the most perfect obedience.

The Gospel tells us, that, during the years of his private or hidden life which our blessed Redeemer spent at Nazareth—during the eighteen years which passed from his being found in the temple, till he entered upon his public ministry, “he was subject” to his ~~Blessed~~ Mother and St. Joseph, and that “he advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.” As if to prove to us the importance of perfect obedience to those whom Providence places over us, this is all that the Gospel relates of Jesus Christ during those eighteen years of his life amongst us:

Now, who is he that subjects himself to this perfect obedience? whom does he thus obey? and in what things?

1. He who subjects himself to this complete obedience is God, the Creator and Lord of all things—

it is he whom all creatures are bound to obey, and to whom the entire universe is subject ; it is he who thus becomes a Model to man of perfect submission and obedience.

2. And whom does our blessed Lord thus obey ? The Blessed Virgin ~~Mary~~ his Mother ; and ~~Joseph~~ Joseph, a poor Mechanic ! The Eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, the great Lord of heaven and earth obeys his own creatures, because they had been appointed by his heavenly Father to hold the place of Superiors in his regard !

3. And in what things does he obey them ? In such things as are esteemed low and mean in the eyes of the world—in such things as are accustomed to be done by a poor mechanic for the purpose of gaining a livelihood. The moment he was told to do anything, he did it ; and he did it in whatever manner he was directed.

From all this we learn, that the excellence of a spiritual life does not consist in doing works, which appear great and honourable in themselves ; but in doing those works, which God commands by means of those whom he has placed over us, however low and mean those works may be in themselves. We learn therefore how we ought to be confounded at our own pride and selfwill in not subjecting ourselves to those who are in authority over us, or in not obeying them for the love of God from whom they hold that authority ; seeing, as St. Bernard says, that the great King of heaven subjected him-

self so low, even to his own creatures, for our example.

POINT II. But Jesus Christ not only obeyed the will of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, and obeyed them in low and humble offices ; but he withdrew himself as much as possible from the notice and admiration of men, for the sake of practising greater humiliation. Although he was the eternal Wisdom of the Father, yet he would not by public preaching or miracles make known who he was, till he was thirty years of age ; but would lead till then a life of retirement and obedience, and thus cover his graces, his wisdom, and Divinity under the mantle of perfect humility. From this pattern which he has set us, we learn how we should conduct ourselves in our external employments, by avoiding as far as we can the notice and admiration of men, after the example of Jesus Christ, who had nothing in view but to obey and please his heavenly Father, performing his works in the silence of retirement, that, while he was labouring with his hands, he might be praying in his heart, and offering himself and all his employments to his Father. We learn therefore how to conceal the gifts and talents which God may have conferred upon us, whenever there is no necessity of making them known ; seeing that our divine Redeemer did so, during so many years of his sacred life, for our example.

POINT III.
Example of
the Blessed
Virgin.

The Blessed Virgin kept in her heart, says the Evangelist, all that Jesus said and did at Nazareth, making his divine example the constant subject of her meditation ; and she was thereby enabled to advance in every virtue ; especially in humility, and in obedience to the divine will.

Oh ! what a happiness it was for her, to have constantly before her eyes such an example of perfect virtue, and to make it the constant subject of her meditation for the purpose of imitating it ! Oh ! how blessed was she in thus enjoying the company of such a Model of every virtue ! in having him always by her side ! in being with him daily while he was engaged in his employments ! in hearing his words, and enjoying his heavenly conversations, and more especially in being privileged to join in his enrapturing devotions !

Let us, my Brethren, endeavour to imitate her as far as we can, by keeping our Lord always present to our mind, and by placing his example before our eyes in our daily meditations on his life, for the purpose of taking him as our Model in all that we do. Let us beg of him never to depart from us, but to be always with us by his grace, assisting us to copy in our lives the example he has set us. Let us pray that he would actuate us at all times, and in all things, by his spirit, that it may be no longer we that live, but Christ who liveth in us.

SERMON IX.

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

ON INVOKING THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

"There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.)

POINT I.

It is through the Name of Jesus that Salvation is obtained.

St. James tells us, that "every best gift, and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." (*James i. 17.*) And in the Epistle of the present Festival,

St. Peter most positively declares, that those "best and perfect gifts" cannot be obtained by us otherwise than through the sacred name of Jesus: "For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."

Jesus came into this world to seek and to save sinners. "To him, says St. Peter, all the Prophets give testimony, that *by his name* all receive remission of sins, who believe in him." (*Acts x. 43.*) "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." (*Acts ii. 21.*)

It was in this *sacred Name*, that ^{repentance} ~~repentance~~ and remission of sins was preached unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (*Lk.* xxiv. 47.) It was by preaching in this *Name*, that St. Peter moved the Jews to "compunction of heart," and disposed them to "receive the Holy Ghost." (*Acts* ii. 37, 38.) It was for the special purpose of carrying this *Name* before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, that St. Paul was chosen by our blessed Lord to be a vessel of election. (*Acts* ix. 15.) It was by the signs and miracles wrought through this *Name*, that the world was converted from the idolatry and impieties of Paganism to the virtues of Christianity. And it is through the same means, that we may be enabled to serve God, and save our souls.

POINT II.

Temporal evils
are averted by
the Invocation
of this *Name*.

But, besides those special graces whereby we are to save our souls, how many corporal infirmities and temporal evils have been either averted or relieved by the invocation of this *sacred Name*?

Whilst Jesus "dwelt amongst us," he "went about all the cities and towns, healing every disease, and every infirmity." (*Mt.* ix. 35.) "He made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." (*Mk.* vii. 37.) All kinds of diseases fled away at his presence: "The blind see, the lame walk, and the dead rise again." (*Mt.* xi. 5.) And in favour of those, who, after his Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, should believe in him, he promised that "these signs shall

follow them : *In my name* they shall take up serpents, and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover." (*Mk.* xvi. 17, 18.) And accordingly, St. Peter, confiding in this divine promise, said to the lame man who had asked an alms from him : "Silver and gold I have none ; but what I have I give thee : *In the Name* of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk. And forthwith his feet received strength ; and leaping up, he stood and walked, praising God." (*Acts* iii. 6.)

But when, for our greater good, the Almighty permits the affliction to continue, by invoking with confidence the holy Name of Jesus, our cause of sorrow will be turned into a source of consolation and joy ; for, with the Apostles, we shall be enabled to "rejoice that we are accounted worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus." (*Acts* v. 41.) So that, amidst the greatest temporal calamities, our own happy experience will teach us to say with holy Job : "Blessed be the name of the Lord," (*Job* i. 21;) or with St. Paul : "I am filled with consolation, I superabound with joy in all our tribulation." (*2 Cor.* viii. 4.)

POINT III.
Temptations
are overcome
by invoking
this Name.

And whenever we are attacked by the enemies of our salvation—when the storm of temptation arises, and threatens to carry us away by its violence, we have a safe protection—we have a sure refuge to

fly to : for, if we invoke with confidence the holy Name of Jesus, and thus awaken him to our assistance; he will rise up in our defence, and either "command the winds and the sea, and there will come a great calm;" or communicate to us such strengthening graces as will enable us to withstand the attack; according to that promise which he has made to them that believe in him: "*In my name*, he says, they shall cast out devils." (*Mk. xvi. 17.*)

Whoever, therefore, shall reverently, devoutly, and confidently invoke that sacred Name—whoever shall thus fix his dwelling in the aid of the Most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven. He shall not be afraid of the terror of the night; of the arrow that flieth in the day; or of the noon-day devil. A thousand may fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand; but there shall no evil come nigh him, because he hath made the Most High his refuge. He will be enabled to walk (uninjured) upon the asp and the basilisk, and to trample upon the lion and the dragon. For the Almighty says: "I will protect him, *because he hath known my name.*" (*Ps. xc.*)

Indeed, since our Lord has taught us to pray *in his Name*, how completely has that power been abridged, which, till then, satan had so tyrannically and so destructively exercised over mankind! That evil spirit does not want the *will* to injure us now, any more than he did in ancient times; and if God were only to permit, he would not want the power. Why then does he not inflict upon mankind the

same injuries now, as he did before Christ had commissioned his Apostles to preach in his Name to all nations? It is because he is not permitted—it is because the faithful throughout the whole world invoke against that malignant spirit the sacred Name of him who has said: “Amen, amen I say to you: If you ask the Father anything *in my name*, he will give it you. Ask (in my name), and you shall receive.” (*John* xvi. 23, 24.)

Thus it is that the faithful in every age and nation are directed to pray. We are taught to commence our prayers by first imprinting on our forehead the salutary sign of Jesus—the sign of the Cross, and by declaring at the same time, that we pray “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” And we are taught to terminate them also by saying: “Through Jesus Christ our Lord.” And thus we declare, that the confidence we have of our prayers being heard is placed entirely in Jesus Christ—in his Name—in his merits.

You cannot but see, my Brethren, from all that I have been saying on this subject, that the advantages derived from devoutly invoking the holy Name of Jesus are very great. Do not, then, through negligence or thoughtlessness, lose any of these immense advantages; but invoke that saving, that all powerful Name very frequently—at all times and on all occasions; invoke it reverently and devoutly, and always with the greatest confidence; and the happy effects of doing so will soon be manifest in your lives.

SERMON X.

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

ON THE LEPROSY OF SIN.

"Behold a leper came and adored him, saying : Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."
(Matt. viii. 2.)

In this day's Gospel we are informed, that, after our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, "a leper came and adored him, saying : Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean ;" that our blessed Lord granted his request, "saying : I will ; be thou made clean ;" and that "forthwith his leprosy was cleansed."

The Sacred Scriptures frequently take occasion, from bodily infirmities, to represent to us those of the soul. By this corporal leprosy is here represented the spiritual *leprosy of sin* ;—and by the means, which this leper took to obtain a cure, we are taught what the sinner should do to obtain pardon.

After showing that no state is more unhappy, than that of the sinner (or spiritual leper) ; I will

proceed to point out to you the means that should be adopted in order to rise from that unhappy state.

POINT I. The state of a leper among the
 The unhappy Jews was very pitiful and deplor-
 state of sin. able ; and leprosy was a disease
 not quite common amongst them. It
 was a contagious disorder ; it completely disfigured
 the person infected with it, and banished him from
 society, it was very destructive of health, and some-
 times of life. How sad, then, and distressing was
 the situation of any one labouring under that dis-
 order ! So distressing indeed was his situation,
 that the Prophet Isaias could not find a more forc-
 ible manner of representing to us the pitiful con-
 dition of Christ during his Passion, than by comparing
 him to a leper : " We have seen him, and there
 was no sightliness ; the most abject of men ; a man
 of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity. And
 we have thought him, as it were, a leper ; and as
 one struck by God, and afflicted." (*Is. liii. 3, 4.*)

But however lamentable the state of the leper,
 it bears no proportion to the unhappy state of a soul
 in mortal sin. Oh ! my Brethren, if you could see
 a sinner, as he really is—if God were now to lay
 open before you the interior of a soul in sin ; what
 would be your horror ! how utterly you would de-
 test and abhor sin, during the remainder of your
 lives !

I. As corporal leprosy disfigures the whole man ;
 so sin destroys the beauty of the soul, and renders

her loathsome and insupportable in the sight of God and his Angels : " From the daughter of Sion all her beauty is departed," she is " become vile." (*Lam.* i. 6, 11.) It deprives the soul of all the gifts and adornments of grace, and makes her the very sink of corruption and abomination. " The enemy hath put out his hand to all her desirable things, and she is wonderfully cast down." (*Lam.* i. 10, 9.)

2. As leprosy banished from society those who were infected with it ; so does sin deprive the sinner of the friendship of God, and of all the blessings and consolations that flow from it, and makes the soul a slave of Satan, and companion of unclean spirits : " For the wickedness of their devices I will cast them forth out of my house ; I will love them no more : " and " woe to them when I shall have departed from them ! " (*Osee.* ix. 15, 12.)

3. As Leprosy causes continual pains, destroys health, and sometimes life ; so sin renders a soul restless, and uneasy, destroys all her peace and happiness here, and, unless repented of, plunges her into all the horrors of eternal death : " The wicked are like a raging sea, which cannot rest. There is no peace for the wicked, saith the Lord God." (*Is.* lvii. 20.) " They shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever ; neither have they rest, day nor night." (*Apoc.* xxi. 8 ; and ix. 3.) What state, then, can be more truly deplorable, than that of sin ? Yet, how many live in it, without concern !

Were they attacked with corporal leprosy, they would not rest, till they had sought and obtained a remedy ; and yet, what is corporal disease, compared with sin ? “ Sin, says St. Chrysostom, is the only real evil.” O sinners ! open your eyes to the true state of your soul ! Beg of God a deep sense of the great evil of mortal sin ; and that he would give you grace to imitate the Leper, mentioned in this day’s Gospel, in seeking an effectual means of cure.

POINT II.

The means of arising from this state.

The first means, which that Leper employed, was to address himself to his Saviour : He came and cast himself at the feet of Jesus, saying : “ Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” What faith ! what humility ! what fervour and confidence in prayer ! The first step, then, is prayer ; but prayer animated with a lively faith, a profound humility, and a firm confidence in God. As to corporal diseases, we must put this condition : “ if thou wilt ;” because we must prefer God’s will before our own ; but as to the spiritual disorder of sin, we know that God wills our cure, and that he requires us to apply to him for it. Go to him then ; but, like the Leper, go with great humility, and say to him with an entire confidence : Behold, O Lord, the unhappy state to which sin has reduced me ! I know thou art not only able, but also desirous to cure me. “ Heal me, then, O Lord ; and I shall be healed.” (*Jer. xvii. 14.*) I am indeed most unworthy of pardon ; yet stretch

forth towards me the healing hand of thy mercy ; say to my soul, as thou didst to the Leper : "Be thou made clean ; and forthwith my leprosy shall be cleansed."

After humble and fervent prayer, the next step is that which Jesus Christ pointed out to the Leper : "Go, show thyself to the priests, and offer the gift which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

The second means of cure, therefore, is to go and discover your spiritual disorders to the priest, who, as St. Paul says, is "the Dispenser of the mysteries of God ;" and an "Ambassador for Jesus Christ," to whom "God hath given the ministry of reconciliation." (1 Cor. iv. 1; and 2 Cor. v. 20, 18.)

And "the gifts" which you are commanded to offer "for a testimony unto them," are a sorrow for having offended God, a sincere resolution of avoiding both sin and the occasions of it, and a disposition to expiate it ~~by works of penance~~. With these dispositions then—with these special gifts of a contrite and humble heart, you are directed to go to the priest in the Sacred Tribunal of Penance, who, in the name of Jesus Christ, will stretch forth his hand over you, and pronounce in your favour the healing word of reconciliation, and forthwith your leprosy will be cleansed.

Oh ! my Brethren, you at least, whose soul is defiled with the spiritual leprosy of mortal sin, imitate the Leper, mentioned in this day's Gospel : Prostrate yourselves before God in humble and fervent prayer ; beg of him to penetrate your soul with

a deep sense of your misery, to move your heart to true contrition, and to produce in you a real change of heart. With these dispositions hasten to the ~~Sacrament of Penance~~, and then, like that Leper, you will be cleansed from your spiritual leprosy, restored to the state of grace, received to the friendship of God, and enriched with the blessings which he never fails to bestow upon those who return to him in the sincerity of their heart, and you will become re-entitled to the possession of that eternal happiness for which you were created. ✠

SERMON XI.

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

ON THE MEANS OF PERSEVERING IN VIRTUE—
VOCAL AND MENTAL PRAYER.

“Lord, save us ; we perish.” (Matt. viii. 25.)

Our passage through this world may be considered as a voyage over a tempestuous and dangerous ocean. During this voyage, we are always liable to suffer shipwreck and perish eternally : for the storm of temptation may arise at any moment ; and we cannot proceed in safety, if left to ourselves, or if we depend on our own endeavours : we must have the divine assistance, and upon that assistance we must place all our confidence ; for otherwise we cannot persevere in God's service, but must inevitably fall off and perish.

But we cannot have the requisite assistance, unless we will take the means necessary for obtaining it. What, then, are those means ? The first, the most necessary, and the only one whereon I will

now speak, is *that* which the Apostles employed, when they found themselves in danger of being buried in the waves—they had recourse to God by *Prayer*: “Lord, save us ; we perish.”

POINT I.

If we would
avoid evil &
do good, we
must pray.

Prayer is a necessary means of avoiding evil, and doing good.
And hence Divines unanimously teach, that, “For adults prayer is necessary for salvation.” St. Alphonsus Liguori, quoting the words

of Lessius, says: “The necessity of prayer for adults cannot be denied without an error against faith ; because it is clear from the Scriptures, that prayer is the only means by which the help necessary for salvation can be obtained.” Christ says: “Without me you can do nothing” (*John* xv. 5) ; but he also says: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” (*2 Cor.* xii. 9.) Now, how are we to obtain that necessary grace, but by prayer? how are we to obtain it, except by the means which God has appointed *as a condition* without which he will not give it? When we have not the graces of God, St. James tells us why: “You have not, he says, *because you ask not* ;” or, “*because you ask amiss.*” (*James* iv. 2, 3.)

Prayer is not only a necessary means, of divine appointment, for obtaining God’s saving graces ; but it is a *certain and efficacious* means. For the truth of this we have his own positive assurance: “Amen I say to you: Ask, and you shall receive ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened

unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth" (*Lk. xi. 9*); that is, if he shall ask in a proper manner. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself, says the Book of Ecclesiasticus (*xxxv. 12*), shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart *till* the Most High behold."

We cannot desire clearer or stronger proofs, that prayer is a certain and efficacious means of grace, than these positive declarations of Almighty God. Evidently, it is the key of heaven, as St. Augustine calls it, which opens to us the inexhaustible treasury of God's special graces!

Oh! let us, then, have recourse to this *necessary*, this *certain*, this *efficacious* means of grace! and let us apply to it with a diligent *perseverance*; because perseverance in prayer is as necessary as prayer itself. While Moses held up his hands, whereby is signified his perseverance in supplicating God for assistance, Israel prevailed against the enemy; but when Moses ceased to hold up his hands, then Israel also ceased to be victorious. (*Exod. xvii. 11.*)

POINT II.
Both vocal
and mental
prayer.

Hitherto I have been speaking of prayer *in general*. We have now to consider what kind of prayer is thus so necessary for salvation, and is such a certain and efficacious means

of obtaining God's special graces. For prayer is of two kinds: one is called *Vocal*, and the other *Mental*.

1. *Vocal Prayer* is that, wherein we worship and supplicate God by some set form of words.

This kind of prayer is a homage which we *owe* to God ; and which we have been taught by our blessed Saviour : “ When you pray, say, Our Father, &c.” (*Mt.* vi. 9.) It is a homage which the Church renders to God in her Liturgy, and by enjoining so many daily vocal prayers to her Ministers ;—it is a homage which is very pleasing to God ;—and which procures for us many and great blessings, if we recite our prayers with proper devotion. When we render this homage to God, the heart *must* be in accordance with our words, because Vocal prayer is the outward expression of the inward feelings of the heart.

2. The other kind of prayer is MEDITATION, which, in a certain way, may be said to be necessary for us. Even vocal prayer must, as we have just seen, be animated with the feelings of the heart ; but this cannot be without some kind of thought or consideration. We should occasionally, during the day, pour forth our hearts to God, by some short aspirations or ejaculatory prayers ; now, these are preceded and accompanied by some thought or consideration—by some reflection on the *cause or object* of those prayers. This is, in some sense, mental prayer ; but it is not precisely what we understand by Meditation—it is not *formal* Meditation.

By Meditation is meant, calling to mind some truth of Religion ;—reflecting upon that truth so as to draw some practical consequence from it ;—lamenting that our lives have not been more con-

formable to that truth, and resolving to render them conformable to it in future ;—and then pouring forth our soul in most fervent supplications to God, begging for grace to execute these resolutions. This is what is meant by Meditation or mental prayer.

Meditation is the applying of the soul to the great affair of eternity, in order to produce within us a strong and practical conviction of the important truths of salvation. It enables us to see clearly, and in their true light, the divine maxims of the Gospel,—it impresses them strongly on our mind,—it fixes them deeply in our heart,—and excites our affections to ardent desires and to determined resolutions of practising them ;—it discovers to us our many wants, our spiritual infirmities, and our sins ; and it shows us, at the same time, how to seek and obtain a remedy ;—it elevates our soul to a more perfect knowledge of our Creator, and of his infinite perfections, exciting us to admire to praise, and to love his omnipotence and immensity, his infinite mercy and forbearance, his infinite bounty and goodness, and the infinite everlasting love which he has manifested and exercised towards us.

Oh ! how great, how precious are the advantages which may thus be derived from daily meditation ! and yet how many persons are there who excuse themselves from applying to this holy exercise, under the idea that it is not necessary for them, but that it belongs only to Monks and Nuns. It certainly does belong to Religious Orders—it is the

daily food of their souls, and it is so necessary for them, that if, by negligence, they should deprive themselves of it, they would soon become languid in virtue—they would fall into a state of tepidity, and would be in danger of perishing eternally. Meditation does not, however, belong to the Religious only; but to such persons also as live in the world. And for *you*, my Brethren, who are engaged in the distractions and cares of the world,—who are surrounded on all sides by dangers,—and who stand so much in need of some effectual means of making you attend to your soul—for you, who are thus circumstanced, is it not to be looked upon as being even more necessary than for the Religious. It is not, however, (theologically speaking,) absolutely necessary; if you omit it, no one can say that you *thereby* commit a sin: but still it is in some way necessary that you should practise meditation, as being a means of enabling you to advance and persevere in virtue. How much soever you may be engaged in the cares and distractions of the world, you are still obliged to take care of your soul—to work out your salvation; but can you accomplish this great and important work, without thinking about it?—without seeking and employing the proper means?—without imploring and obtaining God's assistance? and is it not by Meditation that all this is done? Oh! then, practise meditation: never allow a day to pass, without employing some time in this holy exercise. You will not repent of this practice, nor regret the time you have spent in

this kind of prayer ,when you come to die ; but you will be exceedingly glad of it *then*, and will wish you had given more time to it.

Oh ! what a comfort—what a consolation will it then be to you, to look back upon your daily meditations, if only you have been faithful in this pious practice ! What confidence it will give you at that *fearful* hour ! But it will not be fearful to those that have regularly practised daily Meditation ; because as they will have *lived* in God's grace, so they may confidently expect to *die* in it. “Daily Meditation” says Saint Teresa ; and Saint Alphonsus Liguori repeats the same,—“Daily Meditation, and mortal sin *cannot* exist together in the same soul.”

Let us, then, be regular and devout in the pious practice of daily Meditation, that we may thus be enabled to avoid sin, to love and serve God, and to die in his grace. And then, being admitted to the Beatific Vision, our daily Meditations here will be succeeded hereafter by those perpetual contemplations of the divine Perfections, which will render us, like all the rest of the Blessed, supremely and eternally happy.

SERMON XII.

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

ON HELL.

"Gather up the {cockle,} and bind it up in bundles to burn; but the wheat gather ye into my barn."
(Matt. xiii. 30.)

We were created, my Brethren, by Almighty God for a most happy and desirable end—to be gathered, as good wheat, into his barn—to be happy with him for ever in his eternal kingdom, as a reward for our loving and serving him during the present life.

But many—very many there are, who forsake his service by committing sin—by living as cockle among the wheat. And what is *their* last end? What is to be their future lot? Our blessed Lord tells us, that they shall be the victims of his eternal vengeance—they shall "be bound up in bundles to burn"—"they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death; and the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever; neither shall they rest day nor night." (*Apoc. xxi. 8; and xiv. 11.*)

At the time of harvest, then, that is to say, at our death, we shall be taken out of this world; some to enjoy eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven,

and some to be cast into everlasting flames. But not in equal numbers ; for by far the greater part of mankind will be lost eternally ; and this we learn from our Redeemer's own words : " Enter ye in at the narrow gate, he says ; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, he continues, and strait is the way that leadeth to life, and *FEW there are* that find it." (*Mt.* vii. 13, 14.) How terrific are these words ! how appalling !

There are but two ways wherein we can walk—one leading to heaven, the other to hell. We must walk—we do walk in one of these two ways ; for there is no other. The way to heaven is a narrow and difficult way—it is the way of mortification, of restraint, of self-denial, of self-crucifixion. Do you walk in this narrow, this difficult way ? You must do so, or else you are not in the way to heaven : " For the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and *ye the violent* bear it away." (*Mt.* xi. 12.) " Except ~~you do penance~~, you shall all likewise perish." (*Lk.* xiii. 3, 5.) " How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it !" (*Mt.* vii. 14.) This is the only way to heaven.

POINT I.

The way to hell is broad and easy.

But what is the way to hell ? Let us consider this, that we may avoid it. The Gospel tells us—faith assures us, that the way to hell is very wide, and spacious,

and pleasing to man's inclinations ; and consequently, that it is a very easy way ; now all men naturally love ease, enjoyment, and wealth ; and therefore the way to hell is not a lonely way, but crowded to excess : "How wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat."

The way that leads to hell is that which worldlings follow, when they give themselves up to the love and pursuit of the honours, riches, and pleasures of this life, neglecting the pursuit of virtue, and the care of their soul ; it is the way of self-will, self-love, and self-indulgence.

This way seems sweet and easy to human nature ; it appears very inviting to the worldly and carnal-minded man ; but let us now see what miseries it leads to in the end.

POINT II. The miseries to which this way leads.	It leads to that "land of misery," where there will be perpetual darkness, of which the Egyptian darkness was but a type. It leads to a dreary dungeon, an eternal prison ; so narrow, that the poor incarcerated sinner cannot stir.
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It leads to a pool of fire and brimstone, into which the reprobated sinner is cast, to be tormented forever. He is forced to live in fire—to breathe liquid fire,—to be perpetually immersed in a sea of living fire ; not like the fire in this world, which was made

for our use and benefit ; but infinitely more piercing, more searching, more excruciating !

All sinners will be cast into this devouring fire : “ They shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone ; day and night they have no rest, but the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever.” But Christian sinners will be plunged into the very depth of this burning lake—into the very essence of fire ; or, as the Prophet Isaias expresses it, into the “ *spirit* of burning.” (*Is.* iv. 4.) For the Prophet is speaking of the punishments to be inflicted, not on the Gentiles, but on the people of God, who offended him. And indeed, the Gospel tells us the same thing : “ That servant who knew the will of his Lord, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes : but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required ; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more.” (*Lk.* xii. 47, 48.) The heathen sinner, therefore, and those who have lived and died in false religions, will be beaten indeed with stripes, they will be cast into fire ; but Christian sinners will be beaten with many stripes, *they* will be cast into the very essence of fire—into the very “ *spirit* of burning”—into the lowest hell.

Oh ! how fearful, how terrible a thing it is for sinners, and more especially for Christian sinners,

to fall into the hands of the living God ! into the hands of his vengeance !

If you wish to escape his terrible vengeance—to avoid being cast into the pool of fire, as the victims of everlasting burning, you must forsake the broad way that leads to destruction ; and enter, in good earnest, upon the narrow path that leads to everlasting life. For, as I said before, there are but two ways, in one of which you are now walking. Are you pursuing the narrow way—the way of penance, of restraint, of self-denial, of the mortification of your passions, and of self-crucifixion ? If not, then you are not going in the way to heaven. Consequently you are in the broad way—in the way to hell. Oh ! my beloved Brethren, proceed no further along the fatal path ! forsake instantly and for ever this fascinating way, along which the enemy is alluring you to your everlasting ruin. Lay aside every evil practice to which the love of honours, riches, or pleasures may have led you ; and enter now upon the narrow path of virtue and perfection. “ As you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity ; so now yield your members to serve justice, unto sanctification. For what fruit had you then in those things, of which you are now ashamed ? For the end of them is death. But being made free from sin, and becoming servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end is life everlasting.” (*Rom. vi. 19 to 22.*)

SERMON XIII.

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

ON THE TRUTH AND DIVINITY OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH.

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed." (Matt. xiii. 31.)

The holy Fathers and Commentators, explaining this parable, say, that by "the kingdom of heaven" is here meant the Church of Christ, or his kingdom on earth. (This is evident from the parable of last Sunday, which represents "the kingdom of heaven" as being like to a field, wherein cockle was sown among the wheat; for this cannot be said of the kingdom of heaven otherwise than as meaning the Church or kingdom of God on earth.) Christ compares this his kingdom, that is to say, his Church, to a grain of mustard seed, both on account of the smallness of its origin; and also on account of the extent of its rapid increase. "It is the least indeed of all seeds: but when it is grown up, it is

greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof." So the Church, small as it was in its first establishment, soon increased to such a degree as to be spread over the whole world.

By an effect of the divine goodness, you have been made members of this Church of all nations ; you have the happiness of believing and professing its doctrines ; and I will now call your attention to some of the evidences which show, that the Religion which you thus profess is true and divine ; and also to that return of gratitude and fidelity, which you owe to the divine goodness for having thus called you to the true Faith.

POINT I.

The Catholic
Religion true
and divine.

God has established a Religion upon earth, by means of which we may render to him the homage which he requires from us—the homage of our understanding, by believing the truths which he has revealed to us, and believing them on the authority of his word,—the homage of our confidence, by a complete reliance on his divine goodness and mercy, and on his infallible promises, through the merits of Christ,—the homage of our affections, by loving him with our whole heart and soul above all things, for his own sake,—the homage of our will, by obeying and serving him in such way as he has commanded,—and the homage also of our body, by a devout performance of the external acts of religious worship. These duties

must be performed *according to that particular form of Religion which he himself has prescribed.*

Thus, the Law of Moses was prescribed by God for the Jews, and was therefore *for them* the only true Religion, till the coming of Christ. While Jesus Christ was on earth, he established in its place the Christian Religion, which is far more perfect—the very same which we have the happiness to profess, and which is the only true Religion in the world. Though small in its first establishment, it soon became universal.

In establishing this Religion, Christ chose twelve Apostles ; he revealed to them a body of doctrines ; he proved by his miracles the truth of these doctrines, because he proved thereby his divine authority to teach them ; after his death and resurrection, he commissioned his Apostles to teach those same doctrines to the whole world, promising to be with them in their teaching, and with their successors, “all days even to the end of the world” (*Mt. xxviii. 19, 20*) ; and that the Holy Ghost should also “abide with them for ever,” and should guide them into all truth.” (*John xiv. 16 ; and xvi. 13.*) As he cannot make false promises, it is evident that he *has* been with the teachers of his Church ever since, and *is* with them now ; and that the Holy Ghost *has* guided and still *does* guide them into all truth. That Religion, therefore, which has come down from the Apostles, that is to say, that Religion which the Apostles taught, and which their successors have

continued to teach in every age, must be the *true* one, and the *only* true one.

In order, then, to know which is the only true Religion of Christ, we have but to look out for that one which has existed ever since ; because that must necessarily be the true one. Now, all the world knows, and is forced to acknowledge, that, amongst all the religions which now exist, ours is the oldest ; that is to say, it is the only one that *can* be the true one ; because it is the only one that has existed long enough to have had Christ and the Apostles for its founders. Ours had existed, and had been the Religion of the Christian World, above fifteen hundred years, when the proud spirit of private judgment led men to set up religions of their own, in opposition to that which had come down from the Apostles of Christ ; and they called their new religions a *reformation* ! These new religions, teaching new doctrines, and prescribing new forms of religious worship, could not have been from the Apostles, because they came into existence fifteen hundred years too late : they are therefore mere human inventions, and not divine institutions. Besides, ours is the only Religion, which verifies the parable of this day's Gospel—the only one, which, like the grain of Mustard seed, became, after its first growth, greater than all others ; so as to be the only Religion in the world, to which the term "*Catholic*" can apply.

The Catholic Church is the only one wherein there is unity of faith, the want of which is an evi-

dent mark of falsehood ; because contradictions cannot come from God. As there is only "one Lord," so there is only "one faith, and one baptism." (*Eph. iv. 5.*) The religion of the reformation is divided into a thousand different doctrines or creeds : it is a "kingdom divided against itself," and therefore it is not of God. (*Mat. xii. 25.*) But *we* are all united in one and the same faith, and are all under the same Head—the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ appointed to be the Head of his Church.

The Catholic Church, then, is the only Religion that possesses the character of truth ; it is the only one wherein we can find the real successors of St. Peter—the only one that possesses the Sacraments and Sacrifice instituted by Christ—the only one that enjoys the effect of the divine promises, which secure it in Unity and Truth, and which give us the most solid grounds for certainty.

POINT II.

We ought to practise what this Religion teaches us.

Yet, notwithstanding these grounds for complete certainty how many of our poor fellow-creatures—how many of our own neighbours and acquaintances, allow themselves to be deluded by the spirit of error—to be "tossed to and fro", and carried about by every wind of doctrine!" (*Eph. iv. 14.*) Oh ! how you, my Brethren, ought to thank God, for having preserved (or delivered) you from the unhappy delusion ! how you ought to bless and praise his infinite goodness, for having chosen you

out of the thousands amongst whom you live, to make you members of his One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church ! And how you should endeavour to show your gratitude, by being faithful and devout in practising what your faith teaches you !

Cherish in your heart, my Brethren, a strong and sincere attachment to this Religion of all ages and all nations ; and be always ready to make open profession of its doctrines and practices, whenever circumstances require you to do so : "For, with the heart, we believe unto justice ; but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." (*Rom. x. 10.*) Never be ashamed then of professing and practising your Religion in the presence of others, whoever they may be ; for you should bear in mind those words of Jesus Christ : "He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven : but every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven." (*Mt. x. 32.*)

SERMON XIV.

Septuagesima Sunday.

THAT THE DIFFICULTIES OF LEADING A VIRTUOUS
LIFE ARE NOT SO GREAT, AS PEOPLE
GENERALLY IMAGINE.

"Many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt.
xx. 16.)

Although we are all of us called to do our appointed work in the vineyard of the Church, that, after having "borne the burden of the day," we may receive the recompense of our labours; yet our blessed Lord assures us, that "but few are chosen"—that but few only succeed in obtaining the reward of eternal life.

Now, what is the cause of this failure of the greater part of those who are called? what is the reason why they are not chosen? Is it that they are really unequal to the labours required from them? No, my Brethren, it is not that a greater task is imposed upon them, than they are able to

perform—it is not that the work, for which they are engaged, is so difficult as to be beyond their strength. But the cause, why so few succeed in being chosen, is in their own will : the real reason is, not because they *cannot*, but because they *will not* correspond with their call. They will not take the means of obtaining God's special graces ; or, after having obtained those graces, they lose them for want of due co-operation ; and on this account it is, that salvation appears to them to be a difficult task.

But I will now endeavour to show, that salvation is not so difficult as it is generally imagined to be ; for that its difficulties are very much exaggerated.

Be not therefore disheartened, my Brethren ; for, though the practice of a virtuous life seem difficult—though your weakness and past failures represent it to you, as being beyond your power ; you have, nevertheless, the strongest reason to take courage ; because he, who requires you to lead a life of virtue, will himself assist and enable you to succeed, as he has promised.

POINT I.

The example of
the Israelites,
under Josue.

When the Israelites, by the command of Almighty God, were about to go and take possession of the land of promise ; but were required to fight and conquer their way, before they could obtain possession of it ; they furnish us with an example of what I am now saying. The people, considering the great advantages of that conquest, were quite ready and desir-

ous to enter upon the task. But, before they began the enterprise, something happened which discouraged them, and put them in danger of losing the promised possession.

For Moses, by the command of God, had sent twelve spies to view the land, and to bring word back of what sort it was, and how they could obtain possession of it. These spies brought back some fine fruits, as specimens of the richness of the soil, and they described the country as most fertile land, abounding with delicacies, and "over-flowing with milk and honey."

Yet, most of them so exaggerated the wearisomeness of the way, the strength and fierceness of the enemies whom they would have to contend with, and the difficulties of obtaining the desired possession, that the people were quite discouraged from the undertaking; they wished to abandon it altogether, and proposed to return again into Egypt.

But Josue and Caleb, who had ascertained the real truth, corrected the false exaggerations of the other spies, and encouraged the people to proceed to the undertaking, as being not so difficult as they supposed—much less difficult than had been represented to them.

So God has commanded you, in like manner, to subdue your passions, to root out your vices, and to lead a life of virtue, that you may thereby gain possession of the true land of promise, the kingdom of heaven. The happiness of virtue, as contrasted with the misery of being slaves to your passions;

together with the greatness of the reward to be gained—the reward of eternal life ; these are bright prospects, and very inviting, and they are calculated to make you wish to enter upon so advantageous a warfare, in order that you may make so good, so rich a conquest.

But the devil comes with his delusions and lying representations. He does not, indeed, deny the greatness, the value, the richness of the conquest, if it could be effected ; but he exaggerates the difficulties that attend it, he exaggerates them to such a degree, as to make it seem to you almost impossible to succeed ; and he does this, in order to discourage you by a kind of despair, and so prevent you from ever setting to.

But, my Brethren, as Josue, who had been appointed by God to conduct his chosen people into the promised land,—as he undeceived them, and encouraged them to proceed to the fulfilment of the divine Command ; so am I now endeavouring to destroy a similar delusion, with which the devil would deceive you to your eternal ruin.

POINT II.

**False reasoning
on the subject
of salvation.**

You are commanded by God to gain possession of the true land of promise—the kingdom of heaven, by employing yourselves in a spiritual warfare—by labouring to work out your salvation. But you will perhaps say to yourselves (that is, the enemy will suggest it to you) : “ To what purpose ? for how

difficult is this work ! How powerful are the enemies I have to contend with ! how weak am I, and utterly unable to stand against them ! I cannot succeed in this undertaking ; why, then, should I trouble myself about it ? why should I labour so much in vain ? I may as well leave this difficult task to the Saints, as it is too much for my weakness."

But, my Brethren, this is not good reasoning ; it is quite false and delusive. Do you reason in the same way about your worldly pursuits ? If any earthly enterprise which you undertake be difficult, you do not say : "I must therefore give it up ;" no, but you take courage, and say : "It is indeed a difficult affair ; I must therefore be more earnest ; I will exert myself so much the more." And by this means, you can generally surmount your difficulties, and become successful. Now, why do you not adopt the same reasoning on the subject of your salvation ? especially when you consider, that, in labouring for heaven, you are labouring, not for earthly and perishable things, which death may deprive you of at any moment—not for a mere corruptible crown ; but for an incorruptible one—for a crown of glory and immortality—for infinite and endless happiness in the kingdom of heaven ?

Thus should you reason, even if the gaining of heaven were as difficult as the delusions of the enemy would make it appear ; how much more, then, when you know that it is not so difficult a task, as your fears represent it to be ?

POINT III.

God's help will
render the work
sweet and easy.

To your own strength, if you
were left to yourselves alone, it
would of course be very difficult,
and even impossible ; because
we can do nothing without

God's assistance : "Without me, (says our Lord)
you can do nothing." (*John* xv. 5.) But God, who
has imposed this task upon us, does not leave us to
ourselves, but promises that he will himself enable
us to execute it. To each of us he says : "my grace
is sufficient for thee." (*2 Cor.* xii. 9.) And therefore
every one of us may confidently say with St. Paul :
"I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."
(*Philip* iv. 13.) "If God be for us, who is against
us?" (*Rom.* viii. 31.) Or with the Psalmist : "Though
I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evils, for thou, O Lord, art with me."
(*Ps.* xxii. 4.) Even "if whole armies in camp should
stand together against me, my heart shall not fear ;
for the Lord is my Protector and my salvation, of
whom shall I be afraid?" (*Ps.* xxvi. 1, 3.)

And that he may remove still further from us
all cause of fear, he has provided us, in his Church,
with every help, and every means of grace, which we
can desire, or stand in need of.

Therefore, my Brethren, take courage ; and set
about the gaining of heaven in real good earnest.
Give not way again to despondency ; imagine not
that you are unable to lead a good life,—that you
cannot rise effectually from your sinful habits, and
be really devout. Discourage not yourselves by

saying, that your heart is so hard, that nothing will move it—that nothing seems to make any impression upon it. For this is a mere delusion of the enemy, whose object is to make you give up in a kind of despair. Oh! despise, my Brethren, his malignant suggestion. For do you not desire sincerely to overcome your passions, and lead a good life? Would you not set about it in good earnest, and strive vigorously, if you knew that you could obtain heaven in the end? You certainly would exert yourselves—you would spare no labour, if you knew your labours would be successful. But, alas! with regard to virtue and piety, you imagine your heart is so hard, and your mind so dull and heavy, that you believe all your resolutions would be quite useless, and your labours completely lost. This is all delusion, and a dangerous discouragement.

All persons are not of the same temperament. Those who are of a warmer, and more excitable character, are sooner moved, and more easily excited to warmth and fervour; but their warmth sooner cools, and their fervour more quickly relaxes. Whereas, those who are of a contrary temperament, require indeed much more to move them, they are obliged to use some violence with themselves in order to force their will to a good resolution; but when they have thus forced themselves, their resolution, being the effect of a real determination of the will, is firmer, more steadfast and persevering; and therefore it will be more effectual in surmounting the difficulties against which it is directed.

Take courage, then, my Brethren, and be not dismayed at the seeming difficulties with which the enemy seeks to delude and discourage you. What Almighty God said to Josue, I also, in his name, say to you : "Do manfully, and be of good heart ; fear not, nor be ye dismayed at the sight of your enemies ; for the Lord thy God, he himself is thy Leader, and will not leave thee, nor forsake thee. No enemy shall be able to resist thee all the days of thy life : for as I have been with Moses, so will I be with thee ; I will not leave thee nor forsake thee. Take courage, therefore, and be very valiant ; because the Lord thy God is with thee in all things whatsoever thou shalt go to." (*Deut. xxxi. 6 ; and Jos. i.*)

SERMON XV.

Sexagesima Sunday.

ON THE LOVE OF THE WORLD.

"And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and, going their way, are choked with the cares, and the riches, and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit." (Luke viii. 14.)

In order that the seed of God's word may produce its fruit in our souls, whatever is opposed to its growth must be removed—all those dispositions which would prevent it, either from springing up, or from coming to maturity, must be cleared away, and replaced by such contrary dispositions as are here signified by the good ground. Now, amongst the pernicious dispositions which are to be laid aside, our divine Lord points out to us the cares of this world—our attachment to its riches and pleasures. We must therefore divest ourselves of the *love of the world*, which is directly opposed to the spirit of the Gospel, and is declared, in the Scrip-

tures, to be at enmity with God, being wholly "seated in wickedness." (1 *John* v. 19.)

Attachment to the world leads to consequences that are very criminal ; and it entices and urges on those who give way to it, with the prospect of coming happiness, which proves to be a delusive prospect, ending in nothing but misery.

11

POINT I. Consequences arising from attachment to the world.	The love of the world is opposed to the love of God. And hence Saint John says : "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world : for, if any man love the world, the Charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." (1 <i>John</i> ii. 15, 16.)
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In like manner, Saint James says : "Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God." (*James* iv. 4.) Our blessed Redeemer declares the same truth, when he says : "The world hateth me ; because I testify of it, that its works are evil." (*John* vii. 7.)

How hateful, therefore, in the eyes of God, must the conduct of those Christians be, who pay homage to a world which is thus the declared enemy of God ! —who are afraid to acknowledge or practise their Religion, for fear of what the world will think, or say, or do ! With what an indignant eye must God look down upon them, when, to comply with the

notions of their worldly friends, they neglect their Religious duties !

What dreadful examples do we find recorded, in the Sacred Scriptures, of the great evils that have been occasioned through a fear of what the world would think, or say, or do ! St. Peter loved his divine Master,—he was strongly attached to him, and even ready to die with him ; yet, notwithstanding all this, he wickedly denied him, because the spirit of the world had found its way into his heart : “ Art not *thou* one of this man’s disciples ? said a servant maid. No more was required ; Jesus was at that time an object of contempt and derision ; and therefore Peter durst not own him, but said : “ I am not.” Being asked a second and a third time, if he were not a disciple of Jesus, “ he began to curse and to swear, that he knew not the man.” (*Mt. xxvi ; John xviii.*) Here you see into what grievous crimes the spirit of the world led this Apostle ! But that same pernicious spirit has led to crimes of a much darker dye ! For, what made Pontius Pilate pronounce sentence of death over the Son of God ; and deliver him up to be crucified ? what but a spirit of the world—a fear of what the world might say, or do ? He believed, and had *declared*, that Jesus was *innocent* ; but alas ! through fear of offending the world, he acts against his conscience : “ If thou release this man, (said the Jews to him,) thou art not Cæsar’s friend.” (*John xix. 12.*) Dreadful as is the crime of murder, and such a murder ! Pilate commits it—he pronounces deliberately against Jesus Christ the

sentence of condemnation, and delivers him up to be crucified, rather than lose Cæsar's friendship. Indeed, there are no crimes, however grievous, which a love of the world, and human respects, may not lead man to commit.

POINT II. You see the fatal consequences
The promises of loving the world, and of com-
of the world plying with its notions. Worldly
are delusive. friends will seek to allure you into
 such compliance, by promising you
 pleasure and apparent happiness. Should you suffer
 yourselves to be deluded by their empty promises,
 and begin to adopt their spirit, and follow their
 maxims ; they will at first smile favourably upon
 you, and treat you with all the kindness you could
 desire ; so that you will imagine you have begun to
 tread the path of pleasure, and that your career will
 be one of continual happiness : but alas ! how de-
 lusive ! " My Son, if sinners shall entice thee, con-
 sent not to them." (*Prov. i. 10.*) If worldlings allure
 you—if they present the cup of pleasure, mistrust
 the offering ; for it is a concealed poison.

When the world seems to be smiling upon us—to be pouring into our bosom its pleasures, and its comforts ; how often does all this end in disappointment, in vexation and bitterness ? " I have seen all things that are done under the sun ; and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit." (*Eccles. i. 14.*) How often does it happen, that parties of pleasure are changed into those of sorrow,—that festive en-

tertainments end in troubles and vexation of mind?

O vain love of the world! how delusive, how pernicious art thou to those who allow themselves to be influenced, and led on by thee! Thou smilest upon them, whilst thou art working their ruin; thou leadest them over meadows enamelled apparently with the most enchanting flowers, whilst thou art, at the same time, actually digging a pit beneath their feet, into which they must inevitably fall, if they continue to pursue their delusive course! Thy unhappy votaries, who are now enjoying thy treacherous favours, will one day serve as monuments of thy inconstancy: forlorn, despised, and rejected by the world, like the gloomy ruins of some deserted mansion, they will be melancholy instances of the downfall of human pride: "I have seen the wicked (says the Psalmist) highly exalted; and lifted up, like the Cedars of Libanus: I passed by, and lo! he was not; I sought him, and his place was not found." (*Ps. xxxvi. 35.*)

Thus, then, by flattering you, the world deceives you; and by deceiving you, it works your eternal ruin. And how should it be otherwise, seeing that it is an enemy accursed of God;—that its maxims and customs are directly opposed to those of the Gospel;—that its examples are infectious,—its entertainments seducing,—its discourses corrupt,—its temptations many, and often fatal;—in a word, that all things in the world tend to throw obstacles in the way of your salvation? "For the whole

world (says Saint John) ^{with} ~~is seated~~ in wickedness." (1 *John* v. 19.)

Therefore, my Brethren, I entreat you, suffer not yourselves to be any longer ensnared and enslaved by a wicked world ; but henceforth despise it from your heart. Like Saint Paul, be daily crucified to the world in heart and affection ; and according to his advice, "use the things of this world, as if you used them not ; for the fashion of this world passeth away." (1 *Cor.* vii. 31.) Allow not yourselves to be overcome by sinful human respects ; and on all difficult and more trying occasions, when human respects, or a fear of what the world may say, put you in danger of acting against your conscience, call to mind that alarming threat of Jesus Christ : "He that shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this sinful generation ; the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him, when he shall come in the glory of the Father." (*Lk.* ix. 26.) "He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father, who is in heaven." (*Mt.* x. 33.)

SERMON XVI.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

ON FASTING.

“And if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity ; it profiteth me nothing.”
(1 Cor. xiii. 3.)

We must necessarily ~~do penance~~ for our sins, or else suffer the fearful consequences of having neglected it : “ Unless you ~~do penance~~, says our Lord, you shall all likewise perish.” (*Lk. xiii. 3, 5.*) The Sacred Scriptures teach us, that Fasting is one of the means of doing penance for sin ; and the Church now calls upon us to employ this means, during the forty days of Lent. Yet, if you should fast, or in any other way mortify the body ever so rigorously, but do not do it with proper dispositions, it will be of no advantage to your soul, as we learn from the words of St. Paul in this day’s Epistle : “ If I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity ; it profiteth me nothing.”

We have now to consider the great Fast of Lent,—the Advantages to be derived from observing it,—and the Manner in which we should fast in order to derive from it those advantages.

POINT I.

The fast
of Lent.

If we were now in that happy state of innocence, wherein man was first created, there would be no need of ~~doing penance for sin~~; but in consequence of the fall of our first parents, ~~penance and mortification~~ became necessary for us, both as an act of atonement due to the divine justice for past sins, and also as a preservative against future transgressions. For this reason it is, that the Church has appointed and commanded the forty days of Lent to be kept as fasting days; lest otherwise this duty of ~~doing~~ penance should be wholly neglected by her children.

The observance of this fast of Lent has come down from the time of the Apostles, although at first it was not positively commanded, such command being then unnecessary. But alas! the fervour of the Faithful began to relax; and then it was, that the Church commanded the fast to be observed ~~under pain of mortal sin~~. And in giving this command, she acted by an authority received from God: "Whatsoever *you* shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven." (*Mt.* xviii. 18.) "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." (*Mt.* xviii. 17.) "Let every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, purchase to themselves damnation." (*Rom.* xiii. 1, 2.)

We are bound therefore, ~~under mortal sin~~, to observe the fast, unless we have a lawful dispensation.

POINT II.
Advantages
of Fasting.

Many and great are the Advantages to be derived from the faithful observance of Lent.—For,

1. Fasting is a powerful *preservative against sin*; and hence St. Paul says: “I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away.” (1 *Cor.* ix. 27.) And how did he chastise his body? “In much watchings, he says, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often.” (2 *Cor.* xi. 27.) If, then, we would not become cast-aways, by falling off from our duty, we also must chastise our body, and bring it into subjection, by fasting. If we would effectually drive away our spiritual enemy, we must join fasting to prayer: “This kind, says our Lord, (that is, the unclean spirit,) can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting.” (*Mk.* ix. 28.)

2. Fasting appeases the anger of God, and satisfies his justice for the debt of temporal punishment due to our sins; and therefore it is a means of averting those chastisements, which, in this life, are the punishments of sin. Thus, we read in the Sacred Scriptures, that Judith, prepared by a life of fasting, was enabled to deliver her country from the siege of the Assyrians (*Judith* viii. and xiii);—that the Ninivites, by fasting, saved their city from the destruction denounced against it by the Almighty (*Jonas* iii. 10);—that king Achab, against whom the Prophet Elias had pronounced the severest judgments, averted those judgments by fasting;

for, after he had "fasted and slept in sackcloth, the word of the Lord came to Elias, saying: Hast thou seen Ahab humbled before me? Therefore, because he hath humbled himself for my sake, I will not bring the evil in his days." (3 *Kings* xxi. 27, 28, 29.)

3. Moreover, fasting has the effect of disengaging the heart from earthly affections. Intemperance makes us carnal and earthly, and renders the soul so dull and heavy, that we are hardly capable of performing spiritual duties. But fasting, on the contrary, sets the soul free from these carnal affections, enables us to soar above earthly things, and fits us for the exercise of prayer and meditation.

POINT. III.

The manner
of observing
Lent.

These are some of the advantages of fasting: it helps to preserve us from sin,—it appeases the anger of God,—it satisfies his justice,—and it fits us for spiritual exercises.

But, in order to derive from it these inestimable advantages, you must spend these days of penance in a proper manner.

1. It is necessary, of course, to observe the fast, unless you have some reasonable and sufficient cause of exemption. To violate it, without such cause of exemption, would be a mortal sin. You must fast, then, because you are bound to do so under pain of mortal sin; this however should not be your only motive for fasting, but you should enter into the spirit of the fast, by employing it both as a means of taming your passions, and also of doing

penance for your sins. Otherwise, it will not be "such a fast as the Lord hath chosen." (*Is. lviii. 5, 6.*)

2. During Lent, you must join prayer to your fasting. You should pray at all times, but more especially during these days of humiliation and penance. You should employ yourselves in lamenting your sins, by frequent and fervent acts of contrition, with firm resolutions of avoiding them in future; and in imploring the grace of persevering in your resolutions.

3. And if your conscience tells you, that you are in the unhappy state of mortal sin, you should prepare yourselves at once for the Sacrament of Penance, that you may not lose the merit of your fasting.

If you will observe Lent in this manner, what merits you will thereby acquire! what blessings and spiritual advantages you will derive from it! Some efforts indeed will be necessary on your part—you will have to offer some violence to self-love—you will have to practise daily self-denials. But what are these, when compared with the immense advantages to be gained thereby? "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if, by the spirit, you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." (*Rom. viii. 13.*) "For the wisdom of the flesh is death; but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace." (*Rom. viii. 6.*) "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." (*2 Cor. iv. 17.*)

SERMON XVII.

The first Sunday of Lent.

ON NOT DELAYING REPENTANCE.

“Brethren, we exhort you not to receive the grace of God in vain. Behold now is the acceptable time,—behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.)

My Brethren, we have now entered upon the solemn Fast of Lent—upon those days of mercy and grace, wherein Almighty God, by the voice of his Church, calls upon all sinners to renounce their evil ways, and to return to him sincerely by repentance, and by works of penance. This “acceptable time” is a grace, which the divine mercy now offers you ; and most earnestly do I exhort you, in the words of the Apostle, “not to receive this grace of God in vain ;” but to “return to him now with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning”

(*Joel* ii. 12); that is, in bewailing your sins, and in ~~doing penance~~ for them.

Every sinner, by indulging his passions, forsakes his God, who is his last End; and thereby he wanders from the happiness for which he was created; he provokes moreover against himself the divine anger, and so prepares for himself an eternity of misery. Oh! how deplorable it is that the greater part of Christians, though created for everlasting happiness, should be so insensible to their own good, as to wander from the way of salvation; and for the sake of a few momentary gratifications, plunge themselves into infinite and endless torments!

It is this unhappiness of sinners, that the whole Church of Christ now bewails; and with the tenderest solicitude, she admonishes them, in the words of the Apostle, that “now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation:” now is the time for sinners to obtain mercy from their offended God, by returning to him with sincere repentance; and to lay the foundation of a new life, by resolving to take the means necessary for persevering in virtue.

Avail yourselves, my Brethren, of the “acceptable time,” while you have it in your power—while it continues to be for you “the day of salvation.” When God call sinners to repentance, he is ready to receive all those who obey his call; but if, by continued delays, they refuse to yield to his invitations, he then prepares to execute upon them the severest judgments.

POINT I.
 God receives
 sinners who
 obey his call.

At present God offers you his mercy ; and he calls upon you, by the mouth of his Prophet Ezechiel, to accept of it : “ As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; and why will ye die, O house of Israel ? ” (*Ezech. xxxiii. 11.*)

Thus, then, notwithstanding the number of your past sins, and the many years, during which you have refused to renounce them ; God still spares you, still invites you to repentance and forgiveness ! Oh ! what goodness, what patience in thus waiting for your repentance, and offering you his pardon ! Oh ! how indebted you are to God’s infinite mercy and forbearance, in not having cut you off in your sins long ago ; and cast you into everlasting torments ! During the time you have been going on in sin, you were standing on the very brink of hell ; and every night you were in danger of falling into its excruciating flames ! During that time millions of others have been cut off in their sins, and are now doomed to a miserable eternity.

Yet *you* are spared ; and not only spared, but called to repentance, with the promise of forgiveness. And during the time of your wanderings, how many calls have you received ? how many remorsees, or reproaches of conscience ? how many desires to forsake sin, and return to your duty ? how has the Almighty been calling you, by the preaching and admonitions of his ministers,—by the threat of

his judgments, and the inward terrors which he has occasionally made you feel,—by spiritual books, good examples, and the interior motions of his grace? All these calls the delaying sinner has refused to obey—all these offers of mercy he has rejected. Oh! my Brethren, resist no longer, lest you should provoke God's mercy to give place to his justice by punishing such neglect and abuse of his special graces: "~~Delay not to be converted to the Lord your God, and put it not off from day to day; lest his wrath come on a sudden, and in the day of vengeance he destroy you.~~" (Ecclus. v. 8, 9.)

Renounce your sins now, while mercy is offered you; and renounce them effectually;—shake off your spiritual sloth and tepidity, and enter in good earnest upon a new course of life;—repent sincerely of the evils you have committed, ~~and do penance for them~~,—implore pardon for your past sins, and grace to avoid them in future. All this must be done before you can expect to escape the terrible effects of God's anger, which he threatens to execute upon impenitent sinners. The present time is given you for this purpose: you know not how soon it may be taken away from you. Then why delay?

Nothing is more common, than for sinners to put off from day to day the work of their repentance and amendment, yet nothing is more dangerous!

Thousands are thereby daily betrayed into everlasting woe! How many have thought, like you, they would begin soon; but kept putting off, day after day, till, by the just judgment of God, the oppor-

tunity of repentance was taken from them by a sudden or an unprepared death ! If you put off till this or that particular time, you may be dead before that time comes ; for you cannot be sure of a single day : “ You know not at what hour the Son of Man will come : He will come, like a thief in the night, at the hour when you expect him the least : Be ye therefore always ready.” (*Lk.* xii. 40 ; *Apoc.* iii. 3.)

POINT II.

God threatens
all unrepenting
sinners.

Oh ! resolve, my Brethren,
that you will no longer abuse
God's graces, by resisting when
he calls you to repentance—
that you will abuse no longer his

goodness and forbearance. But, from this moment, whenever by the fear of his judgments, by remorse of conscience, or good desires, he invites you to return to him, yield, my Brethren, to his gracious invitations. Otherwise you have reason to expect, that he will execute upon you those terrible threats, which he denounces against unrepenting sinners : “ Because I called, and you refused ; because I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded—because you have despised all my counsel, and neglected all my reprehensions : I also will laugh in your destruction ; and will mock, when that shall come upon you which you feared. Then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear.” (*Prov.* i. 24, 28.) Or he may execute his judgments upon you in another way, not less terrible, namely, by not giving you the desire of returning to him, nor even so

much as the thought of calling upon him : "Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes : lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them." (*Is. vi. 10.*)

We have an example of the execution of these divine threats in the unrepenting Jews, whom God speaks of as his ungrateful vineyard. He took away the hedge thereof, and it was wasted ; he broke down the wall thereof, and it was trodden down ; and he made it desolate ; it was neither pruned, nor digged ; but briars and thorns were allowed to spring up ; and the clouds were commanded to rain no rain upon it. (*Is. v. 4, 5, 6.*)

The Almighty gives us another similar example under the parable of the fig-tree, upon which he inflicted his curse, and it instantly withered away (*Mt. xxi. 19*) ; and again of that other fig-tree, for which he waited three years, and then would wait no longer ; but said : "Cut it down, therefore, why cumbereth it the ground ?" (*Lk. xiii. 7.*)

POINT III.
Therefore it
is dangerous
to delay.

But, if God had not thus threatened, still, could any thing be more presumptuous, than to delay your repentance on the confidence of repenting at some future time ? Is the future at your own disposal, either as to time or grace ? Either one of these, and even both of them, may fail you : God has nowhere promised pardon to those who will not repent, but will go

on abusing his graces ; on the contrary, he has threatened that he will execute his judgments upon them : “ Delay not therefore to be converted to the Lord your God, and put it not off from day to day, lest his wrath should come on a sudden, and in the day of vengeance he destroy you.” (*Eccclus.* v. 8, 9.)

Will repentance and amendment be easier at a future time ? It is a vain delusion to imagine so. This is a delusion which deceives thousands to their eternal sorrow ! Every delay renders repentance and amendment more difficult ; because your sinful habits, your passions, and the devil’s power, are all stronger ; whilst you yourselves daily become weaker, and God gradually withdraws away from you his more special grace.

Hence, we generally find, that they who delay for a time, continue to delay till their last sickness. But can you depend on a death-bed performance ? Will you not then have reason to apprehend, that your motive is a mere fear of punishment, without any love of God ? that your turning to God then is a forced repentance ; and not a real conversion of heart ? Accordingly, we generally find, that, when these delaying sinners, after repenting in time of sickness, recover their health ; they break their resolutions of amendment, becoming as negligent as before ; and frequently even worse. Now, does not this give some reason to fear that their conversion was not from the heart ? that it was in reality a false repentance ?

Begin, therefore, now in good earnest. Make your peace with God immediately, by a good Confession. And resolve to be, in future, fervent and regular in the important duties of prayer, and approaching to the Sacraments,—in spiritual reading, and reflecting on the practical truths of Religion,—in mortifying your passions, resisting temptations, and avoiding the occasions of sin ; then, being enabled to avoid relapsing, you will enjoy the peace of a good conscience, during life ; you will have confidence and consolation on your death-bed ; and you will receive, after death, the eternal rewards promised to true penitents.

SERMON XVIII.

The Second Sunday of Lent.

ON SANCTIFYING OUR SOULS.

"This is the Will of God—your sanctification."
(1 Thes. iv. 3.)

The whole of our duty, whilst we are in this world, consists in *doing the will of our Creator*. But, in order that we may accomplish God's will, we must learn what it is, that he requires from us—we must *know* what the divine will is in our regard. Now, the Apostle tells us, that, if we would do God's will, we must labour to sanctify our souls: "*This is the will of God—YOUR SANCTIFICATION.*" To this important work of sanctifying our souls, Almighty God calls us, when he says: "Be ye holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy." (*Levit. xix. 2.*)

To this our blessed Redeemer likewise calls us,

when, addressing the multitude, he says: "Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (*Mt.* v. 48.) Not, my Brethren, that we are expected to equal the sanctity and perfection of Almighty God, whose attributes are all *infinite*; but what is required of us is this, that we should labour to arrive, as far as human infirmity will permit, at *that degree* of sanctity and perfection, which will render our will conformable to the holy will of God; and at this we *can* arrive, by the help of divine grace, which God will not withhold from those who sincerely and fervently seek it.

It was to enable us to sanctify our soul, that the eternal Son of God came down from heaven,—set us the pattern of a perfect life,—and purchased for us pardon and grace, by his death upon the Cross.

It was for the same purpose, that he instituted the Sacraments ~~and Sacrifice of the Mass~~, as means of communicating to our souls the merits of his death.

It is for the same purpose (to enable us to sanctify our souls), that the divine Bounty confers upon us so many graces and assistances, which he has provided for us in his Church. With what reason, then, does the Apostle say: "This is the will of God—your sanctification?"

In order, therefore, to fulfil the will of God, *we must labour to sanctify our souls*. But in order to succeed in arriving at sanctity, we must ardently *desire it*,—we must fervently *seek it*,—and we must *persevere* in thus desiring and seeking it.

POINT I.

~~We must have
the Desire of
Perfection.~~

The first step, then, for obtaining sanctity or perfection, is to excite and to cherish in our soul AN ARDENT DESIRE OF IT. "Covet my words, (says Almighty God,) and love them ; and you shall have instruction.

Wisdom (that is, virtue or perfection) is easily seen by them that love her ; and is found by them that seek her : he that watcheth for her, shall quickly be secure. For the most true desire of discipline is the beginning of her. Therefore the desire of Wisdom (or perfection) bringeth to the everlasting kingdom. (*Wisd.* vi. 12, 13, 16, 18, 21.)

It is "*the hungry*," as the Blessed Virgin says in her Canticle, (that is, such as are inflamed with a longing desire of virtue,) that "God fills with good things." (*Lk.* i. 53.) And our blessed Redeemer declares, that "they who hunger and thirst after justice, are blessed," and for this reason : "Because (he says) they shall have their fill." (*Mt.* v. 6.)

Thus, then, to arrive at virtue or sanctity, we must have an ardent desire of it—we must "hunger and thirst after it."

POINT II.

~~We must seek
to arrive at
Perfection.~~

But the mere *desire* of sanctity, however ardent that desire may be, is not sufficient for the gaining of it, unless we also *apply ourselves to SEEK IT* : We must act like the man mentioned in the Gospel, who,

when he had found a pearl of great price, did not content himself with merely *desiring* to have it, but went immediately and sold all that he had, and purchased it. (*Mt. xiii. 45.*) By this we are clearly given to understand, that, if we would obtain possession of virtue or sanctity, we must not remain in a state of *inaction*; but we must apply ourselves in taking the means that are necessary for obtaining what we desire; and this application in taking the necessary means must be *diligent and persevering*.

For, to apply to so important and so necessary a work, as the sanctification of our soul, with *indifference* and *by halves*, or for a *short time* only, would draw down upon us the indignation, rather than *the favour* of heaven; it would expose us to that fearful threat of the Almighty: "Because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." (*Apoc. iii. 16.*)

The perfection of our actions depends on the spirit and fervour with which we perform them. Hence it is, that the very same actions have a greater or less value in the eyes of God, "producing their fruit, some a hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty." (*Mt. xiii. 23.*) Sanctity, therefore, or perfection, depends on the dispositions and fervour accompanying our actions, rather than on the bare actions themselves. Thus our blessed Lord declares, that the offering of the poor widow, who cast into the treasury only two mites, was more meritorious before God (who sees the heart), than the large sums

offered by all the rest. (*Lk. xxi. 2.*) "It is thy intention and fervour, says St. Ambrose, that stamps a value on thy actions : whatever be the degree of devotion and ardour from which they proceed, just so much are they valued at."

And so true is this, that Almighty God equally rewards the sincerity and ardour of the will, even if circumstances prevent the proposed work from being accomplished. "The will is acceptable, says the Apostle, according to what it hath." (*2 Cor. viii. 12.*) Abraham, for example, did not actually sacrifice his Son, being prevented from accomplishing the sacrifice, after he had manifested his readiness and full determination to obey God's command ; and had taken the proper means for this purpose. Yet Abraham received the same reward, as if he had sacrificed his Son : and we read, that God esteemed his sacrifice as actually completed : "Because thou *hast done* this thing, (said Almighty God to him,) and hast not spared thine only-begotten Son for my sake ; I will bless thee : And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice." (*Gen. xxii. 16, 18.*) Thus, my Brethren, if we are sincerely desirous of doing such things as we know to be pleasing to God, and are zealous and fervent in employing proper means for this purpose ; then, though our labour or endeavours may be unsuccessful, they will contribute no less to our sanctification.

POINT. III.

And we must
persevere in
labouring for
Perfection.

Let us, then, be fervent and diligent in *employing the means of sanctification*—let us apply ourselves to all our religious duties with ardour, zeal, and fidelity; and in this, let us resolve to *continue with persevering constancy, till the end of our lives.*

For, in labouring to sanctify our souls, it is not sufficient to labour for a time only; but we must persevere in our pursuit; and never imagine we have arrived at that point, where we can safely stop, without endeavouring to go on. When a man has found the mine he sought for, he does not *then* abandon his labour; but, on the contrary, he applies to it with still greater diligence, in order to make the most of the treasure he has discovered. “No one is really virtuous, (says Saint Bernard,) who does not constantly desire and strive to be *more* virtuous.” Thus it was that the Apostle of the Gentiles acted: “Brethren, (he says,) I count not myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do: forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching myself to those that are before, I press on towards the mark—to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as would be perfect, be thus minded.” (*Philip.* iii. 13, 14, 15.) And in the Apocalypse our blessed Lord exhorts us to the same thing, when he says: “He that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.” (*Apoc.* xxii, 11.)

And, as a powerful motive for urging us to this, he adds : " Behold I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works." (v. 12.)

Therefore, not only an earnest, but at the same time, a continued endeavour to advance in virtue is what God requires of us ; and it is a condition without which he will not continue to us his special graces : for those graces are sure to be withdrawn from those who do not labour to profit by them. And hence St. Augustine very justly says : " If thou stand still, thou art a lost man." (*si stetisti, periisti.*) The graces of heaven being thus withheld, our passions will attack us with greater violence, and will soon withdraw us from the love and service of God. For, we are like a man who is rowing against a rapid stream : the moment he ceases to row, he is driven back by the force of the torrent.

Oh ! let us then, my Brethren, not only *desire* the sanctification of our souls ; but *labour* for it *earnestly* ; and let us take particular care *never to slacken* the ardour of our pursuit. Instead of abating our fervour, let us rather strive to be making continually fresh advances in virtue.

The nobleman, mentioned in the parable, being about to set out into a far country, and previous to his departure, depositing his money in the hands of his servants, commanded them not only to trade with the same, but to trade *until his return*. (Lk. xix. 12.) Let us, my Brethren, obey this command ; so that, when the Lord shall come and demand an

account of our service, we may be able to present to him an ample store of good works—a soul enriched with a high degree of sanctity and perfection.

Then shall we be enabled to meet him with the confidence, that, like those servants who had never ceased from labouring to increase their talent, we are going to receive from him the reward of our fervour and diligence in his service—that we are going to hear from him those consoling words: “Well done, good and faithful servant! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” (*Mt. xxv. 21.*)

SERMON XIX.

The Third Sunday of Lent.

ON THE FALSE REASONING WHEREBY MANY BLIND
THEMSELVES, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT WILLING
TO FORSAKE THEIR SINS.

“Walk ye as children of the light, for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth.”
(Eph. v. 8, 9.)

Saint John tells us, in the beginning of his Gospel, that Jesus Christ “is the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world ;” but that he was a “light shining in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (*John* i. 9, 5); and St. Luke, in like manner, tells us that Christ came “to enlighten them that sat in darkness—to direct our feet into the way of peace.” (*Lk.* i. 79.) But there are many, and very many, who will not receive the light, but shut their eyes against it ; because they prefer to follow their own delusions, which are more flattering to their natural inclinations ; for,

as St. John says, "Men love darkness rather than the light." (*John* iii. 19.) They allow themselves to be deluded—to be voluntarily blindfolded by the enemy, and by their own passions; and thus they become willing victims to the most fatal delusions, whereby they suffer themselves to be led on in habits of sin, to their own eternal ruin.

But that you may both see and feel the necessity of laying aside such fatal delusions, and may be induced to "walk as children of the light," I will endeavour to show you what those delusions are, which make so many Christians the unhappy slaves of satan and of their passions, and which keep them, year after year, in habits of sin.

POINT I.

1st Delusion :
God will easily
forgive.

One of the delusions, whereby the enemy endeavours to lead you into habitual sin, is by suggesting to you the prospect, and even a certainty of future repentance—of easily recovering God's grace. Oh ! what a delusion ! Because God is merciful—*because* you can entertain a hope that he will forgive you, *therefore* you will offend him ! But, although God has promised pardon to *repenting* sinners, he has not promised it to those who *will* continue to abuse his mercy. On the contrary, he declares that he "will not be mocked ;" that when those, who thus abuse his mercy, call upon him, he "will not hear" (*Prov.* i. 26, 28) ; for, that, "the hope of the wicked shall perish." (*Prov.* x. 28.)

You must see, my Brethren, that there cannot be a greater folly—a more impious delusion, than to offend God deliberately, *because* you know that he is good and merciful—to run the certain risk of losing your soul, because you have *some* hope that you may perhaps be enabled to escape its actual loss ! Would you throw all your money into a deep river, because you had some hope that you might perhaps find it again ? If not, then why will you plunge your soul into sin, and so expose yourselves to the certain danger of being cast into hell, from a presumptuous hope of a future but very uncertain repentance ? Remember, that true repentance is a free gift of God : if he do not give it to you, then you are lost for ever ; and, by thus abusing his mercy, you take the very way to provoke him to punish you by not giving it.

POINT II.

2nd Delusion :
God will bear
with my youth.

But you may perhaps say to yourselves : “ I am young : God will bear a little with the follies of my youth. Afterwards I will repent, and attend to his service.”

This is another very common delusion, by which many are led into habits of sin which they never afterwards renounce.

You may be young ; but is that any reason why you should offend God ? Is it any excuse for living in habitual sin ? or does it give you a security against dying in sin ? It is not the number of your days that God regards, but your virtues or vices. Every

sin you commit, whether in youth or in old age, will be equally recorded against you. And moreover, by thus spending your youth in sin, you have every reason to fear that you will continue to be a sinner all the days of your life, according to that alarming declaration of the Book of Job (xx. 11): "His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust."

POINT III.

3rd Delusion :
Later it will
be more easy.

For the devil always persuades a sinner that "*He cannot overcome such or such a temptation at present, but that he will be able after a short time, to over-*

come it more easily." That easier time never comes, because the enemy continues to keep up the same delusion. And how should it be otherwise? for every time you yield to temptation, the enemy becomes stronger, and you get weaker; your passions grow into a habit, and become like a second nature; and thus, by continuing in sin, instead of rendering repentance and amendment more easy, you are daily adding difficulty to difficulty.

There is not a greater delusion, nor more fatal error, than to imagine, that you *cannot overcome this or that temptation at present*. St. Paul assures us we are never tempted above our strength: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." (1. Cor. x. 13.) And in all the temptations

which he does permit, he promises us his special assistance : “ Call upon me in the day of trouble ; and I will deliver thee.” (*Ps. xlix. 15.*) “ Ask, and it shall be given you.” (*Mt. vii. 7.*) His promises are sure to be fulfilled on his part, if we will fulfil the conditions on our part ; for “ God is not as man, that he should lie ; nor as the son of man, that he should be changed. Hath he said then, and will he not do ? hath he spoken, and will he not fulfil ? ” (*Numb. xxiii. 19.*) In every temptation therefore, and every difficulty, have recourse to him, and he will give you all the strength you require, and every help you can stand in need of.

POINT IV.

4th Delusion :
God will still
bear with me.

But the sinner will not pray ; at least he will not pray with a sincere desire to avoid sin. The devil lulls his troubled conscience to sleep, by persuading him that “ *he need not be alarmed ; because, since God has borne with him so long in his sins, he may venture to hope that he will bear with him some time longer.* ” Then, because God has not yet punished your sins, will he *never* punish them ? Instead of following these delusions, listen to the advice of the Holy Ghost : “ Say not : I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me ? for the Most High is a patient rewarder.” (*Ecclus. v. 4.*) Thus, you see, God bears patiently for a time, but not for ever : he waits till a certain period ; and, when that arrives, then he chastises the sinner who has been thus abusing his mercy ;

and the longer he has waited, the more severe will be the chastisement, when it does come.

As soon as the sinner has filled up the measure of his iniquities, God hurries him out of life to cast him into hell. What reason, then, you have to tremble, lest, if you commit another sin, God should deal thus with you ! For he positively declares to us, that "Evil doers shall be cut off." (*Ps. xxxvi. 9.*) "Revenge is mine, and I will repay them *in due time*," saith the Lord (*Deut. xxxii. 35*) ; that is, I will punish them when they have abused the measure of graces allotted them.

Oh ! my Brethren, ponder well these divine threats against sinners ! Beg of God to open the eyes of your soul, that you may see the danger of continuing in sin. Resolve to renounce your evil habits, and to renounce them immediately : "To-day, if you shall hear his voice (the voice of God calling you to repentance), harden not your hearts." (*Ps. xciv. 8.*) Return sincerely to God, and he will receive you : but you must return before it be too late. For, if you go on deferring it from day to day, he declares that "his wrath shall come on a sudden, and that in the time of vengeance he will destroy you." (*Ecclus. v. 8, 9.*) He declares, moreover, that he will come like a thief in the night, when you least expect him. (*Apoc. iii. 3.*) Therefore, my Brethren, prepare for his coming immediately : Make yourselves ready, and keep yourselves *always* ready ; "for at what hour ye think not, the Son of Man will come." (*Lk. xii. 39, 40.*)

SERMON XX.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent.

ON FORSAKING, NOT ONLY SIN, BUT ALSO THE
OCCASIONS THAT LEAD TO IT.

"Cast out the bond-woman and her son." (Gal. iv. 30.)

Being members of the true Church of Christ, and called to be co-heirs with him in eternal glory, "*we, my Brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*" But our passions, (which incline us according to the flesh,) when excited by the occasions of sin, put us in imminent danger of being changed from "*the children of promise*" into children of perdition. "*But what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son*"—cast out of your heart those passions, and quit those occasions, which keep you in a state of unhappy bondage: cast out these, together with the sins and vicious habits which are their fatal offspring. But how is this to be done?

In order to cast out of the soul your sins and vicious habits, you must renounce the occasions which lead to them. It is, then, on the necessity of avoiding the dangerous occasions of sin, that I will now address you.

POINT I. When sinners rise from the death of sin in such manner, as not only to renounce sin, but the occasions of it, they will then be enabled, by the aid of divine grace, to persevere in their newness of life ; but if, after rising from their sins, they allow themselves to be still fettered by the occasions which had led them to them, they will be sure to fall back into the sinful habits which they had renounced. If, therefore, you would persevere in virtue after repentance, you must renounce both *sin* and the *occasions* of it.

The natural depravity of the human heart inclines us to evil : “All the thought of man’s heart, says Almighty God, is bent upon evil at all times.” (*Gen. vi. 5.*) This is what St. Paul declares to us, when, speaking of himself, he says : “I find a law, that, when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God according to the inward man ; but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members.” (*Rom. vii. 21.*)

POINT II. Therefore, when we expose ourselves unnecessarily to dangerous occasions, we have every reason to fear that we shall be drawn into sin. For such occasions awaken and powerfully excite our natural inclinations to evil, so as to render it very difficult

to avoid yielding to sin. For, when the occasion of sin is present with you, that very circumstance renders the temptation more powerful, and gives a very great advantage to your spiritual enemy, if he then solicit your heart to sin.

Our First Parents fell into mortal sin in consequence of not quitting immediately the alluring occasion that led to it. God had forbidden them to eat the fruit of a certain tree. The devil came and tempted Eve to eat that forbidden fruit, and immediately she resisted the temptation, by refusing to eat against God's command. She did not, however, fly from the occasion, but continued to look at the forbidden object, and then she took it into her hand ; and having thus exposed herself to the danger, she very soon yielded by eating the fruit. Had she sought safety by immediately flying from the tempting object, she would probably have preserved her innocence. Oh ! let this sad example, my Brethren, be a warning to you. Keep at a distance from that place,—from that acquaintance,—from those companions, that would be a source of temptation or of danger to you. Bear in mind the rule which our divine Saviour lays down on this subject : “If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee...And if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee ; for it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that thy whole body should be cast into hell.” (*Mt.* v. 29, 30.) Therefore, whatever you find to be an occasion of sin to you, you *must*

renounce it entirely, though it should be to you as dear as a *hand* or an *eye*.

POINT III.

And especially
when chastity
is endangered.

But, there are no occasions which should be avoided with greater care, than those which endanger the angelic virtue of purity. Speaking of temptations against that virtue, St. Augustine says: "The warfare is common to all; but the victory is rare." To be victorious in this warfare, you must necessarily apply to God for his assisting and protecting grace; because the holy virtue of purity is, in a particular manner, the gift of God. "As I knew, says the Wise Man, that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it,...I went to the Lord and besought him...with my whole heart." (*Wisd.* viii. 21.)

POINT IV.

The privation
of the Special
graces of God.

Now, you know, that, if you go *without necessity* into the occasion of sin, God will not hear the prayers by which you ask his assistance; but will withhold his protecting and supporting grace, in punishment of your rashness, and thus he will leave you to experience in yourselves the truth of those words of Ecclesiasticus: "He that loves the danger shall perish in it." (*Ecclus.* iii. 27.) For, not only being tempted by your own excited passions, and by the enemy also at the same time, but deprived, moreover, of God's special assistance; what can you expect but

to yield? "Put a torch into a bundle of hay, as St. Chrysostom says, and then tell me the hay will not be burnt." Or, as St. Cyprian says, "Stand in the midst of flames, and tell me you are in no danger of being scorched:" I would believe you just as soon, as when you go unnecessarily into the occasions of sin, and say you are in no danger of falling, because God will preserve you by his special grace.

The sacred Scriptures, speaking on this very subject of not exposing ourselves to tempting occasions, cautions us by expressions that are equally strong: "Can a man, says the Book of Proverbs (vi. 27), can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn? or, can he walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?" In the same manner, I say: Can you expose yourselves unnecessarily to the immediate occasions of sin, and your soul not be defiled with guilt? I say, *unnecessarily*, because otherwise you might expect God's special protection and support.

Therefore, my Brethren, guard against the guilt of sin, by carefully shunning the occasions that would lead to it; just as you would guard against the sting of a venomous serpent, by keeping out of the reach of the reptile. Always bear in mind that important and salutary caution of the Holy Ghost, which I have before quoted, and with which I will now conclude, that "he who loves the danger, shall perish in it."

SERMON XXI.

Passion Sunday.

ON THE NECESSITY OF SACRIFICE.

“He is the Mediator of the New Testament ; that, by means of his death, for the Redemption of those transgressions which were under the former Testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” (Heb. ix. 15.)

From these words of St. Paul, which show the necessity of that atoning Sacrifice which Christ offered for us on the Cross, and by which he purchased our Redemption ; I will take occasion to explain to you still further that Necessity of Sacrifice ; and will show moreover, that the Sacrifice, which Christ offered for us on the Cross, is continued in the Church by means of the Mass, whereby its precious fruits,

and atoning merits, are efficaciously applied to our souls ; and that the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is, therefore, not only the most perfect and sublime, but also the most essential act of Christian worship that we can perform ; the most pleasing to God, and most beneficial to our souls.

POINT I.
The necessity
of an atoning
Sacrifice.

Ever since the fall of man, Sacrifice has been an essential act of Religious worship—a means, of divine appointment, whereby men have applied to their souls individually the fruits of that general Redemption, which Christ purchased for us on the Cross ; so that where there is no Sacrifice, there can be no *real Religion* ; there can only be, at most, the mere *shadow* of Religion, without the substance, because what is essential to Religion is wanting.—In order to show this, it will be necessary to consider the condition of man before and after his fall.

Our First Parents were created in a state of perfect innocence,—were enriched and ennobled with the gift of divine grace,—and were intended for the enjoyment of eternal happiness in heaven, without dying. But, before they could receive that happiness, they were to have proved themselves worthy of it, by the discharge of certain acts of Religion, to which they became obliged in consequence of the relation that existed between them and their Creator. For no sooner had they received their existence, than they had an essential duty to

perform—they were bound to pay to HIM, from whom they held their being, the homage of *supreme adoration*. For, as they were mere creatures, depending on their Creator for their whole being—for all that they were, and all that they had, both truth and justice strictly obliged them to acknowledge God's supreme dominion over them, and their entire dependance on him. This is what is meant by *supreme adoration*, which is due to God, and to none but God. This, then, was the homage which they owed to their Maker; it was the homage he required from them; and so long as they preserved their innocence, they could present this homage in a way that was perfectly acceptable to him.

But, if confined merely to the interior of the heart, it did not satisfy him; for he required that this homage which they owed him—this acknowledgment of his dominion, and of their dependance, should be expressed by them, not only internally by the inward sentiments of the heart, but also externally by outward acts of submission. For this reason he gave them a command, and required them to obey it; and it was by obeying it, (during such time as it should please him to keep them here in a state of probation,) that they were to pass, without dying, from the earthly to the heavenly paradise, there to live for ever in eternal glory. But in case of disobedience, instead of being entitled to immortality and future glory, they were to forfeit both—they were to become the victims of both temporal and eternal death.

When, therefore, our first parents transgressed the divine command, they not only lost their innocence thereby, with all the blessings attending it, but they merited death moreover, and eternal punishment at the hands of God. In this deplorable state to which sin had now reduced them, they were as strictly obliged to pay their homage to God, as they were before their fall ; but they were now no longer able to pay it in a manner pleasing to him : nothing which they could now present to him would be acceptable, because they were tainted with sin,—their whole being was under its guilt. Before their homage could ever find acceptance with him again, he required that full satisfaction should be made to him for the injury which they had offered to his divine Majesty,—he required that their transgression should be atoned for, by an atonement *equal* to the offence. Now, the offence, being an outrage offered by a mere insignificant creature to God's infinite Majesty, was in this sense infinitely great ; the atonement, therefore, to be equal to it, must be of infinite value. But no one could make an atonement of infinite value, unless he were infinite in the dignity of his nature : evidently, therefore, *man* could not make it ; and yet, the justice of God demanded it of him, as a necessary condition of reconciliation. How, then, was it possible for man to obtain a reconciliation with his offended God, seeing he could not fulfil the necessary condition of it ? He might, indeed, repent of the evil he had done, and in this sense offer to God the sacrifice of a contrite heart ;

but this would not be a sacrifice *sufficient* to atone for his crime : He might present himself to God a victim of death, by willingly resigning his life into the hands of his Maker—that life which, though it was to have been eternal, was now demanded of him by the divine justice, as a punishment of sin ; but neither would this be a sacrifice *sufficient* to atone for his guilt : Moreover, his soul, infected still with the whole guilt of sin, might descend, after death, into that pool of fire enkindled by God's anger, where he was, as a further punishment, doomed to suffer eternally the most excruciating torments ; but not even would this be a sacrifice *sufficient* to take away sin, or to diminish its guilt. More than this man could not do to satisfy the justice of God, yet more was necessary. For it is evident, from reasons already given, that there must not only be presented to God a victim for sin, but that that victim must not be itself under the guilt of sin ; and, moreover, that it must be such a victim, as, from the infinite dignity of its nature, would be capable of making an atonement of infinite value. The dignity of the atoning victim must be equal with that of the person offended ; otherwise the satisfaction could not be full and complete, as it was required to be. And yet, as it was MAN that had *sinned*, MAN must be *the victim* for sin.

Such, then, was the atonement, which, from the moment our first parents fell, was exacted from them, as a necessary consequence of their fall ; and, as they themselves (wholly defiled as they were, with sin,

POINT III.
The Sacrifice
of the Mass.

By the sacrifice which he offered for us on the Cross, he purchased the Redemption of all mankind, fully and completely ; but it was a general Redemption, requiring individual application. For, although he has thus redeemed all of us, fully and completely, by his death upon the Cross ; yet all are not thereby saved ; for, to many—even to the greater number, it will be said at the last day : “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.” (*Mt. xxv. 41.*) Now, why will they be thus condemned eternally, seeing that they have been fully and completely redeemed ? They will be condemned, because it will be found, that they did not take the means, appointed by him, of applying to their souls, individually, the merits of that general Redemption which he had purchased for them.

The great means which our Lord has appointed for this purpose, is the Sacrifice of the Mass, whereby that of the Cross is continued amongst us, and wherein we may obtain a special and particular application to our souls of the general merits of Redemption.

By uniting ourselves, therefore, with the divine Victim which is offered on our Altars, we worship God in a way that is pleasing to him ; and we can obtain, efficaciously, an application to our souls of the fruits of that Sacrifice by which our Redemption has been purchased. For, in every Mass that is celebrated, Christ presents to his eternal Father the infinite merits of his Passion and Death, pleading

mercy and pardon in our behalf. However numerous or grievous our sins may be, if we do but sprinkle ourselves with the blood of this spotless Lamb of God, by devoutly assisting at Mass, we may obtain the grace of true contrition, which will reconcile us with our offended God ; and we are enabled to pay to the Almighty our homage of adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation, and supplication, in such way as will be truly pleasing and acceptable to him.

You now see the *Necessity* (and also the *Nature*) of Sacrifice—that it is an act of *that* religious *Worship* which is due from us to our Creator, and due *only* to him : You see that the Sacrifice, by which we were redeemed, is that whereby Jesus Christ offered himself for us on the Cross ; that this Sacrifice of Christ is continued and perpetuated in the Church, and its fruits daily applied to our souls individually, by means of the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass ; and consequently, that the Mass, as I have already said, is the greatest, the most perfect, and most sublime act of religious Worship that we can perform ; the most pleasing to God, and most beneficial to our souls.

And therefore, whenever you assist at this holy Sacrifice, (which the Church strictly commands you to do on all Sundays and Holidays of Obligation, and which she earnestly exhorts you to do on other days also, as often as you can,) take care that you always do it with the greatest *devotion* and *reverence*, and with a truly *penitential spirit*. Invariably partake of the divine Victim, spiritually at least, if you

cannot do so sacramentally ; but communicate sacramentally as often as your Spiritual Director shall judge it to be expedient for you. By so doing, you will be completely armed against all the enemies of your salvation—you may bid defiance to the devil, the world, and the flesh ; for your soul, purified, by the atoning merits of Christ, both from sin and from the debt of punishment due to it, will be strengthened to support and surmount all difficulties that may oppose you ; till you shall be called out of this vale of tears to the sight and possession of HIM in heaven, whom you here adore, and receive, and offer up in sacrifice, in the divine Mystery celebrated on our Altars.

SERMON XXII

Palm Sunday.

ON THE LESSONS WHICH CHRIST GIVES US
FROM THE CROSS.

“ You know that after two days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified.” (Matt. xxvi. 2.)

As our blessed Lord, by his Crucifixion and death, which, during this week, we are called upon in a more special manner to contemplate, not only purchased our Redemption, but instructs us moreover in the practice of perfect virtue ; let us now consider the important lessons he gives us from the Cross, with the view of fulfilling the divine precept of doing all things according to the pattern which was shewn us on the mount. (*Heb. viii. 5.*)

In the Twenty-first Chapter of the Book of Numbers, we read that the children of Israel, when on their way through the desert, "began to be weary of their journey and labour;" and that they murmured, and rebelled against God and against Moses. "Wherefore the Lord sent among the people fiery serpents, which bit them and killed many of them; upon which they came to Moses, and said: We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and thee; pray that he may take away these serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to him: Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign; whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live. Moses therefore made a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign; which when they that were bitten looked upon, they were healed."

This, my Brethren, is a figure of Jesus Christ raised up on the Cross, and from the Cross healing our wounds of sin, which have been inflicted by that fiery serpent, the devil. Let us, then, as penitents, have recourse to Christ lifted up on the Cross—let us look upon him, by meditating on the examples and instructions which he there gives us. His merits will heal our wounds, and his example and instructions will strengthen and secure us against future relapses.

But what are the instructions which he gives us from the Cross? My Brethren, his Crucifixion may be said to be the concentration of all the teaching of his whole life.

The particular lessons, which our Lord gives us in his Crucifixion, may be learned from his seven last dying words upon the Cross.

POINT I. He teaches us to exercise perfect charity towards our enemies by forgiving them from our hearts, and praying that God also would forgive them : "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (*Lk. xxiii. 34.*) Thus Jesus Christ forgives those from whom he suffers, and at the very time when they were putting him to death, and even excuses them to his heavenly Father. But, though *he* pleads an excuse in our favour, can *we* urge that excuse? Ah! my Brethren, we knew what we were doing, when we committed sin, we knew that we were offending God. We have no excuse therefore, that we can plead, unless it be that of the penitent David, when he said : "For thy name's sake, O Lord, thou wilt pardon my sin, *for it is great.*" (*Ps. xxiv. 11.*)

POINT II. Jesus teaches us to submit to reproaches, humiliations, and contempt, in the spirit of humility. For he bore in patient silence, all the reproaches and insults which the Jews uttered against him, while he was hanging on the Cross. "And they that were crucified with him reviled him." (*Mk. xv. 32.*) But one of these, moved by sincere repentance

"rebuked the other, saying : Neither dost thou fear God ; for we, indeed, are justly condemned, for we receive the due reward of our deeds ; but this man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom." And our Lord immediately forgave him. For he said to him : " Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise." (*Lk. xxiii. 40, 43.*) Both thieves suffered, but only one was pardoned. We must suffer—we must all suffer, whether we will or not ; but if we would profit by our sufferings, as the penitent thief did, we must suffer as deserving chastisement, with patience, resignation, and in the spirit of penance.

POINT III. Jesus teaches us to look upon the Blessed Virgin Mary as our Mother, and powerful intercessor. She stood at the foot of the Cross, assisting most devoutly at that divine Sacrifice which her divine Son was offering for our Redemption. "Woman, behold thy Son." "And when Jesus had seen his Mother standing by the Cross, and the disciple whom he loved, he saith to his Mother : Woman, behold thy Son. After that, he saith to the disciple : Behold thy Mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own." (*John xix. 26, 27.*) Oh ! let us also, my Brethren, take her to our own ; for we are likewise committed to her, in the person of St. John. In all our trials, difficulties, dangers, and temptations, let us run to her for help and protection, and let us

have recourse to her intercession, with the greatest confidence; for she is the "Comforter of the afflicted—the Refuge of sinners,—and the help of Christians."

POINT IV. Jesus teaches us to mingle our tears of repentance with his atoning Blood. He said: "I thirst." (*John* xix. 28.) His executioners were insensible to his sufferings, and not only refused him the drop of water which he had asked for, to quench his thirst; but offered him gall and vinegar instead.

But he was dying for our Redemption, his thirst was for our reconciliation with God; the drops of water, therefore, which he asks of us to quench his thirst, are our tears of sincere repentance. Oh! let us, then, give them to him; let us weep for the share which our sins have had in his sufferings; like St. Peter, let us turn away from our sins, and weep bitterly for having committed them; and like Magdalen, let us prostrate ourselves at his feet, and water them with our tears of repentance, ~~by approaching worthily to the Sacrament of Penance.~~

POINT V. Jesus teaches us to have recourse to God in time of distress, and not to lose confidence, even when the divine goodness seems to abandon us. Addressing his heavenly Father, he says: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (*Mt.* xxvii. 46.) Oh! my Brethren, does the eternal Son

of God, "the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, who upholdeth all things by the word of his power" (*Heb. i. 3*),—does the innocent, the spotless Lamb of God, complain of being forsaken by his heavenly Father—of being forsaken by Him who had said : "This is my beloved Son in whom I am always well pleased?" (*Mt. iii. 17.*) How is this? It is because Jesus, having taken upon himself our sins, put himself in our place as the victim of atonement. We deserve to be abandoned by heaven; but he suffers it for us, thereby to propitiate his eternal Father to look down favourably upon us, and to grant us the grace of true repentance. Oh! let us unite our most earnest supplications with the voice of Christ, entreating him to confer upon us this precious grace, and not to withhold it from us in consequence of our sins. My God! my God! do not abandon me in my sins—let not thy mercy forsake me, although I have frequently forsaken thee!

POINT VI. Jesus teaches us to be faithful
 "It is consummated." in executing the entire will of God
 in our regard—to be exact in fulfilling all the duties for which we
 were sent into this world, and to renounce sin for ever.

On this subject, Christ said of the great work which he came to perform : "It is consummated." (*John xix. 30.*) Yes, all the predictions of the ancient Prophets concerning him; all the types and figures, which had reference to him, are con-

summated ; the establishment of the New Law, and of the Christian Church, is consummated ; the atonement for sin—the Redemption of the world, is consummated. But with regard to fulfilling the will of God, and atoning for sin, what can we say of ourselves ? Can we say that we have done all that the will of God requires of us ? that we have accomplished the work for which we came into this world ? With regard to that portion of time we have lived, can we say, that, so far, this is consummated ?

POINT VII.

“ Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.”

Jesus teaches us to resign ourselves to the care of God, on all occasions ; and more particularly to cast ourselves entirely into his hands in

times of our greatest distress, and at our last hour ; and to do this with calmness, and with a complete confidence in the goodness of God. Thus it was that Christ did for our example : “ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ; then, bowing down his head, he gave up the ghost.” (*Lk. xxiii. 46.*) Yes, he expired ! But who were his executioners ? Ah ! we know, my Brethren, that sin was the cause of his death ! The Jews, from whose hands he suffered it, were only the instrumental executioners ; the real ones—the true cause of his death, were our sins. Oh ! shall we not, then, lament them ? shall we ever cease to lament them, and to supplicate his mercy for pardon ? No, my Brethren, let our tears run down day and night, in bewailing the great

evil we have done. Oh ! then, let us, now that we see the heinousness of sin in the greatness of the atonement it has required—let us go to our loving Redeemer, and prostrate ourselves at the foot of his Cross, with the greatest confidence and love, and with heart-felt sorrow for having added to his sufferings by our sins ; for we have the strongest reasons to entertain all these feelings :—With these feelings, then, let us go to the foot of the Cross of Jesus, and implore his forgiveness ; promising him, with the firmest determination, never again to renew his sufferings, by a renewal of our guilt.

SERMON XXIII.

Easter Sunday.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

"You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified : he is risen : he is not here." (Mark xvi. 6.)

My beloved Brethren, during the last few days, the Church has been occupied in contemplating the outrages and torments, which our blessed Saviour endured, during the course of his Passion ; she has been inviting you to weep with her over the sufferings and death of her divine Spouse. But, on this day, which is that of his triumph, the Church calls upon you to wipe away your tears, and to join with her in singing "Alleluias" of joy "to the King of glory ; because, after having laid down his life for our salvation, he has risen triumphant over the powers of hell."

Oh ! if you were as attached to your Saviour, and had been as much affected at the consideration of his sufferings, as those pious women were, who,

early in the morning of this third day, hastened to their Saviour's tomb to embalm his body; you would celebrate this day with a joy equal to that which they experienced, when they received the joyful intelligence of his Resurrection from the dead.

If you loved him, as *they* loved him, then, with hearts full of exultation, you would exclaim in the words of David: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice therein." (*Ps. cxvii. 24.*)

For, the mystery of this day is one that should inspire feelings of joy and exultation to man; because the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the Foundation of our Faith;—it is a sure Pledge, that we also shall rise again;—and moreover, it is the Pattern of our Spiritual Resurrection from the death of sin, to the life of grace.

POINT I.

The Resurrection
is the foundation
of our Faith.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, then, is the *Foundation of our Faith*. For St. Paul grounds the certainty of the Christian Faith upon the fact

of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: "If Jesus Christ (he says) be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins. And if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are, of all men, most miserable. But now Christ *is* risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep." (1 Cor. xv. 17 to 20.) And, my Brethren, the fact of his Resurrection is established by the most certain and

undeniable proofs : and from this fact, so established, we derive this consoling truth—that the Christian Religion, which we profess, is true and divine : and thus, the Resurrection of Christ, being the Foundation of our Faith, is also the Basis of our Hope—the sure pledge that we also shall one day rise again. And this truth furnishes the most powerful motives we can have, to urge us to rise now spiritually with Christ, from the death of sin, to a new life ; and to persevere to the end in this newness of life, in the assured hope of rising with him hereafter to eternal glory.

POINT II.

It is the sure
pledge of our
Hope.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, I say, is a sure pledge that we also shall one day rise again. For, if Christ be truly risen from the dead, then the truth of all the doctrines, which he taught, is firmly established, because he appealed to his future Resurrection, as being the grand proof of his divine authority to teach. As, for instance, when he had been restoring sight to the blind, curing all kinds of diseases, and casting out devils, in presence of the Jews ; and had been doing all this in confirmation of the truths which he had been delivering to them ; and when they, from an obstinate resistance to truth, attributed those miracles to the power of the devil, and, requiring a more certain proof, “asked him to show them a sign from heaven ; he said to them : An evil and adulterous generation seeketh

a sign ; and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the Prophet. For, as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights ; so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." (*Mt. xii. 39.*)

And this prediction he explained, by declaring it, in clearer terms, on several other occasions. Thus, when he was going up to Jerusalem, he said to his disciples : "The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and to the Scribes ; and they shall condemn him to death ; and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified ; and the third day he shall rise again." (*Mt. xx. 18.*)

And accordingly we see, that, no sooner was the body of our blessed Lord placed in the sepulchre, than his declared enemies, the chief priests and Pharisees, thinking, that he had instructed his Apostles to convey his body away secretly, and then to tell the people that he was risen from the dead ; took precautions against this, by "making the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards." (*Mt. xxvii. 66.*)

But, O the folly of the wisdom of this world ! (*1 Cor. i. 20.*) How literally, in all this, are exemplified those words of the Wise Man : "There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord." (*Prov. xxi. 30.*) For, the very care—the very precautions, which they took against our Lord's Resurrection, only served (contrary to their intention) to place the truth of it beyond the shadow of a doubt ; because it rendered all imposture

quite impossible ; and because even the very guards, whom they had stationed round the sepulchre, became eye-witnesses of the Resurrection, and were amongst the first to announce the fact.

Christ, then, having fulfilled what he had foretold, namely, that he would raise himself to life again on the third day ; has established his doctrines on a most firm foundation, because he has thereby demonstrated that he is “our Lord, and our God.” We can, therefore, cast ourselves confidently into his hands, relying, with perfect security, on the truth of all that he teaches.

Therefore, when he declares to us, that, at the last day, he will send his Angels to summon the dead from their silent tombs, and to gather his Elect from the four quarters of the globe, and that he will then render to every one according to his works—when he declares this truth, we must receive it as a sure pledge that we shall one day rise again—that we shall rise to eternal glory, if we obey his commandments ; but to everlasting misery, if we live in the transgression of them.

POINT III.

~~It shows how~~
we are to rise
from sin.

If, then, my Brethren, we are living in such transgression—if our souls are defiled with the guilt of sin, this faith in a future Resurrection furnishes the most powerful motive we can have, to rise now from the death of sin to a life of grace ; that so, escaping the everlasting miseries of the wicked, we may rise

with him hereafter to a glorious and happy immortality.

But this, our spiritual resurrection, in order to entitle us to future glory, must bear some resemblance to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ : it must be real and permanent, as his was real and permanent : "The Lord is truly risen," says the Evangelist ; and "Christ, rising from the dead, dieth now no more—death shall no more have dominion over him." (*Rom. vi. 9.*) So must we, in like manner, rise truly and effectually from the death of sin—sin must no more have dominion over us.

A mere apparent resurrection, therefore, will not suffice—a pretended or superficial conversion to God is to no purpose. It is not enough, therefore, to approach to the ~~Tribunal of Penance~~, and to make your Easter Communion ; but you must accompany these duties with the necessary dispositions of a contrite and humble heart. You must detest your sins sincerely ; and you must renounce them effectually, and also the occasions that lead to them ; otherwise you would not be "truly risen."

But your resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace, besides being real and true, must (as I have already said) have another quality, in order to bear a resemblance to that of your blessed Redeemer : it must be permanent, as his was permanent ; for he rose so as to "die no more."

Such, then, ought to be your resurrection to grace—it ought to bear upon it the character of immortality, by rendering you proof against all the

attacks of your spiritual enemies. For, to what purpose would it be to you, to rise for a time only ; and shortly after to lose the grace of God, by falling again into the same sins as before ?

Therefore, my Brethren, be on your guard. After recovering the life of grace in the Sacrament ~~of Penance~~, use your utmost endeavours to preserve it in future—let the death of sin never again have dominion over you. And for this purpose, be always regular in performing your daily devotions ;—in reading, every day, a portion of some spiritual book ;—in frequently approaching the Sacraments ;—and indeed, in all your spiritual exercises. Frequently beg of God to bestow upon you the gift of perseverance ;—keep at a distance from the occasions of sin, knowing that “he who loves the danger, shall perish in it.” Always bear in mind, that, as the glory of Christ’s Resurrection ought not to make us forget his sufferings ; so your being restored to grace, should not put an end to your doing penance : For, it is by the practice of penance and the mortification of your passions, joined with prayer and the Sacraments, that you will be enabled to preserve your soul in the state of grace ; and to obtain also those special graces which will secure for you a resurrection to a life of glory in the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON XXIV.

T o w S u n d a y .

THAT THERE IS NO TRUE HAPPINESS EXCEPT IN
SERVING GOD.

"Peace be to you." (John xx. 19, 21.)

The peace, which our blessed Lord here announces to his disciples, is that which proceeds from a good conscience. He does not, like the world, wish peace to them by mere empty expressions, but he gives it in reality ; and he communicates to his Apostles, and their successors, the means of giving it to all who will become his followers ; because he communicates to them the power of forgiving sins. Oh ! what peace, what happiness do they enjoy, who are free from the guilt of sin ! For a good conscience sweetens even the severest trials and afflictions of this life. But they who live in sin are very far from enjoying peace—they can have no real happiness ; for "there is no peace for the wicked, saith the Lord God. They are like a raging sea that can never rest. (*Is. lvii. 21.*)

I will now endeavour to show, that the possession and enjoyment of the things of this world cannot content the human heart—that nothing of this world can give any real peace or happiness ; and that it is only in loving and serving God, that peace and happiness are to be found.

POINT I. Nothing of this world can give real happiness.	Both Religion and experience teach, that, when you wander from God for the sake of enjoying the riches, or honours, or pleasures of this life, you wander, at the same time, from peace and happiness ; you wander therefore from that very thing which you seek ; you labour under a fatal delusion, deceiving your own selves.
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The object which men have in view in their pursuits is happiness. Very often, indeed, they falsely imagine, that their happiness consists in the very things which can only make them restless and unhappy : still, what they seek after, in their various pursuits, is what they look upon as a good to them—as something which will render them content and satisfied, or make them happy.

Thus, it is in the possession and enjoyment of wealth, that some seek their happiness ;—others seek it in the gaining of worldly honours ;—and others again, in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures.

Thus, you see, all have one and the same object in view—their own good, their own happiness. They seek it, indeed, in different ways, and in differ-

ent things ; but still, all of them have either true or false happiness in view.

But do they succeed in gaining the object of their pursuit? are they content and satisfied, so as to want nothing more to make them happy? Was ever any one happy in the possession and enjoyment of earthly things?

In the Sacred Scriptures, we read of the greatness, the wisdom, and the wealth of Solomon, and how he endeavoured to derive happiness from these advantages. He himself tells us, that he said in his heart : "I will go and abound with delights, and enjoy good things. I made me great works ; I built me houses, and planted vineyards ; I made gardens, and orchards, and set them with trees of all kinds. I got me men-servants, and maid-servants ; and herds of oxen, and great flocks of sheep, above all that were before me in Jerusalem. I heaped together for myself silver and gold, and the wealth of kings and provinces ; and I surpassed in riches all that were before me in Jerusalem : my wisdom also remained with me. And whatsoever my eyes desired, I refused them not ; and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure, and delighting itself in the things which I had prepared. And when I turned myself to all the works which my hands had wrought, and to the labours wherein I had laboured in vain, *I saw in all things vanity, and vexation of mind.*" (Eccles. ii.) Thus, he who had all the advantages, which this world can afford to make a man contented and happy, found by experience that all

his pursuit of happiness in earthly enjoyments was completely vain, and produced, not the happiness he sought, but "vexation of mind."

No, my Brethren, if, possessing every thing in this world, you were to seek your happiness therein, you could not succeed in finding the object of your pursuit; but you would find misery, instead of happiness. Your own experience would force you to exclaim "On the very tree which my own hands have planted for myself, there grows a thorn which pierces me to the heart, and behold I bleed!"

Now, why is this? It is because created things can never satisfy the desires of your soul—they can never supply your wants; and therefore they can never make you happy.

POINT II.
Real happiness
is to be found
only in God.

Where, then, are you to find that, which, as you have seen, nothing of this world can bestow? What is it that will satisfy your desires, and make you happy? what is it that will set your mind and heart at rest?

My Brethren, you may take it for a certain truth, that nothing whatever, unless it be boundless, and endless, can ever content your mind; less than this will never satisfy the desires of your soul; because your desires are boundless, and your wants are endless. In order, therefore, to satisfy your wants—in order to set your mind and your heart at rest, you must seek and obtain an object that is also bound-

less—one that is unlimited and imperishable, as are the capacities of your immortal soul. And that object, as you well know, is the God that made you : it is only in seeking and obtaining him—it is only in uniting yourselves with him ; (here, in loving and serving him ; and hereafter, in loving, possessing, and enjoying him ;)—it is only in this, that you can find the peace and happiness you seek—it is only in this, that your wants and all the desires of your heart can be satisfied.

God is infinitely and eternally happy ; and he wishes you also to be happy—he wishes you to participate in *his* happiness ; this is the end for which he created you ; and you will obtain this end, if you seek your happiness in him.

If, therefore, ascending above creatures—above all created goods, which, as you have seen, cannot content your heart, nor make you happy—if, rising superior to all these created things, you seek your happiness in God, and only in him, you will find it : for you will be united with him during the present life by his love, which will be perfected in heaven ; where you will be still more closely and inseparably united with him in eternal glory, so as to become in a manner one thing with him.

And in this union with your God, you will share in his happiness, which is infinite. Your desire of possession will then be fully satisfied, because you will possess the kingdom of God, and even possess God himself ; which will leave nothing more to be desired, for you will share in the riches of him who possesses

all things. You will participate in his wisdom, in his power, his holiness, his glory, and in all his perfections : you will be happy with the happiness of God—completely and perfectly happy ; because in possessing God, who is your last end, you will in him possess all things—the boundless capacities of your soul will be filled up, so that your mind and heart will be set at rest.

And you will not only *possess* all this happiness, and possess it to the fullest extent that your heart can desire ; but you will possess and enjoy it *for ever* !

All this infinite, this endless happiness, I say, will be *yours*, if, raising your views above earthly things—above the cravings of your passions and depraved inclinations, you will give your hearts really to God, to seek your happiness according to his will ; and not according to your own will when opposed to his.

And in the mean time, while you remain in this world, you will enjoy such inward peace and happiness—such sweet consolations, as are wholly unknown to them who love and serve this world or their disorderly passions. The truth of this was experienced by St. Francis of Assisium, who found so much pleasure in saying : “ My God and my all ! ” that it seemed to give him a foretaste of the joys of heaven !

Do we ever hear of the votaries of this world experiencing happiness like this in their earthly enjoyments ?

On the contrary, what is more common in the world, than to hear people lamenting that they are restless and unhappy?

All that I have been saying of the happiness of serving God, is so manifestly exemplified in the Saints who have gone before us, that the very reading of their lives seems to cry out to us, in the words of the Psalmist: "O taste and see that the Lord is sweet!" (*Ps. xxxiii, 9.*) Yes, my Brethren, "the Lord is sweet" to them that love and serve him. If, therefore, you will imitate the conduct of the Saints—if, like them, you will renounce earthly attachments; if you will prefer the love and service of God before all things, and labour diligently and fervently in the practice of virtue; then *you*, like them, will taste and see that it is sweet to serve God: you will then enjoy, during life, a peace and happiness which cannot be found in creatures; and in the life to come, your peace and happiness will be perfected in the enjoyment of eternal glory.

SERMON XXV.

The Second Sunday after Easter.

ON THE PRESENCE OF GOD : A MEANS AGAINST
RELAPSE.

"I know mine, and mine know me." (John x. 14.)

Yes, my Brethren, *he* who is our Lord and our God, and who will one day be our Judge, does *indeed* know those who are *his*; for he beholds us at all times: he knows what we *all* are; because he sees, not only all our outward actions, but even our inward thoughts and intentions—the very dispositions of our soul.

But do *we* always "*know him*," by bearing him constantly in mind? or, rather, do we not generally *forget* him? He is always present with us, and always beholds us; but do we attend to his presence—do we bear it constantly in mind? If we did, we should not have so frequently to lament our relapses into sin; because the thought, that *God* sees us, would be a powerful means of preventing us

from yielding to temptation. For it is to a want of attending sufficiently to this reflection, that may be attributed the disorders in our lives. We are inattentive to God's presence—we consider not that he beholds us, and that he will one day render to us according to our works; and hence it is, that we so easily and so thoughtlessly offend him.

How important therefore it is, that we should always bear in mind, that *God sees us*; since this thought would serve both as a powerful check to our passions; and also as a spur, which would be constantly *urging us forward in the practice of virtue*.

POINT I.

It serves as
a check to our
passions.

It seems to have been from a deep conviction of the importance of attending to the presence of God, that ~~holy~~ Tobias, in giving to his Son this admonition: "Take heed

thou never consent to sin, nor transgress the commandments of the Lord thy God;" began his admonition by first inculcating a constant attention to the divine presence, as the ground-work of his instructions: "All the days of thy life (he said to his Son), have God in thy mind" (iv. 6); well knowing, that, on the due observance of this first precept, depended the fulfilment of all the rest. For it would seem impossible, that we should consent wilfully and deliberately to commit grievous offences against a God, to whom we know every action of our life lies open,—who holds in his hand the slender

thread of our existence,—and who has power to cast us both body and soul into hell !

Oh ! let us, then, never lose sight of the presence of God ; but wheresoever we may be, at home or abroad, in private or in public, let us always bear in mind this salutary reflection, that God is present with us and beholds all we do. To every temptation of satan,—to all the allurements of the world and the flesh,—to all solicitations of sin, from whatever source they may arise, let us oppose the same reflection : and not imitate the language of the impious man, who is represented in the Scriptures as saying : “ Who seeth me ? Darkness compasseth me about, and the walls cover me, and no man seeth me : whom do I fear ? ” (*Ecclus.* xxiii. 25.)

For, however we may be concealed from the eyes of men, we cannot escape from those of God : “ Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, (says the Royal Prophet to his God ;) or whither shall I flee from thy face ? If I ascend up to heaven, thou art there : if I descend into hell, thou art there : if I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea ; even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. And I said : Perhaps darkness shall cover me, and night shall be my light in my pleasures. But darkness shall not be dark to thee ; and night shall be light as the day : the darkness thereof, and the light thereof are alike to thee.” (*Ps.* cxxxviii.) Whithersoever, then, we may flee, we shall there find God present with us ; as intimately present, as our soul

is with the body—as inseparable from us, as we are from ourselves.

Oh ! if we have ever permitted our mind to be so taken up with the affairs of this world, as to forget or neglect the divine presence—if hitherto there hath stood one in the midst of us whom we know not ; let us now cast off the veil from before our eyes, that we may no longer be prevented from perceiving in whose presence we are. Let us remember, that, in order to take an exact account of all our thoughts, words, and actions, he waits not till the time, when we shall be summoned before his tribunal for judgment ; but that, *even now*, his eye is every moment fixed upon us,—that he is in the very centre of our hearts,—and observes all that is there transacted. And with this reflection in our mind, can we ever consent to do *that* which we know to be displeasing to him ?

If the Almighty were to manifest himself to us in some visible manner, with wrath and indignation in his countenance, and with uplifted arm, ready to execute immediate vengeance upon the guilty, and to plunge them into the deep abyss of hell ; how few, my Brethren, would be found *so daring*, as to incur his displeasure, by transgressing his sacred laws ? Now, faith assures us, that the Almighty is *really* present with us, wheresoever we are ; and that he looks down upon every sinner with wrath and indignation. And can we, then, have the *rashness* to sin against him, by doing, in the presence of his infinite Majesty, what we would not dare to do

in the sight of man? Can we presume to set at defiance the great Lord of heaven and earth, who, the moment we offend him, can instantly cast us body and soul into hell?

POINT II.

It serves
as a spur
to virtue.

Oh! how many sinners have experienced, to their cost, the sad consequence of such daring rashness and impious presumption! how many thousands of unhappy souls are now

weeping and suffering in the flames of hell, who, if they had attended properly to the divine presence, would have been glorious saints in heaven!

Let us, my Brethren, learn wisdom by their misfortune—let us learn how necessary and important it is, to walk always in the presence of God. For if we duly attend to this practice, it will be to us a *powerful spur to virtue*, and a fruitful source of graces, and of heavenly benedictions.

This practice, of walking always in the presence of God, will serve to render us more diligent in serving God, and in labouring to sanctify our soul, as we learn from these words of the Almighty to Abraham: “Walk before me, and be perfect;” that is, if thou wilt always walk in my presence, thou wilt become perfect. (*Gen. xvii. 1.*)

Let us, therefore, imitate the conduct of the Royal Prophet, who says: “I set the Lord always in my sight; for he is at my right hand, that I be not moved:” and then, my Brethren, *our* “heart,” like his, shall *be glad*, and our tongue shall *rejoice*,

and our flesh also shall *rest in hope*; then shall the Lord make known to us *the ways of life*, and fill us with joy with his countenance." (*Ps. xv. 8, 9, 11.*)

Let us then, my Brethren, use our utmost endeavours to acquire a practice, which is so happy in its effects; and never again be insensible to the presence of a God, who is always with us, and is always watching over us with more than parental affection. Let us frequently converse with him in our heart, by laying before him our wants, and imploring relief; and by offering him all the affections of our soul.

Thus shall we obtain his divine graces and protection; and be effectually preparing ourselves to be admitted into his holy presence in the next life, to be there infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his Beatific Vision, for an endless eternity.

SERMON XXVI.

The Third Sunday after Easter.

ON HABITUAL MORTIFICATION.

"You now indeed have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you." (John xvi. 22.)

In these words, our blessed Lord announces to his disciples first sorrow, and then joy. The sorrow is not to last long ; for it is soon to be succeeded by joys that will be perpetual. Trials, crosses, and afflictions are the portion of fallen man in this life ; and Religion teaches us to add voluntary sufferings and self-denials, in a spirit of penance, to those that come to us by the order of God's Providence. This is the sure way to that future "joy which no man can take from us." For, the ~~mortifications~~ or "sufferings of this present time, which are momentary and light, work for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

It is my intention to show you, that, if you would have future joy, you must live now in the practice of mortification,—that this practice is enforced by the example of Christ, and his Saints,—

and that it is not devoid of present consolation, as the world imagines.

POINT I.

Mortification
here leads to
joy hereafter.

If you would lead the life of true Christians, ~~which, according to the Council of Trent, ought to be a perpetual penance,~~ you must acquire the habit, not of indulging,

but of mortifying your senses. "For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." (*Rom. viii. 13.*) It is in vain, therefore, to think of passing from a life spent here in giving to our soul her desires, and in catching at every pleasure and gratification which the good things of this world afford, to a life of happiness hereafter to enjoy also there the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

No, my Brethren; the just decrees of God have otherwise ordained; as we learn, not only from this day's Gospel, which represents sorrow as preceding joy; but also more clearly from the woe pronounced by Christ against the rich: "Woe to you rich, because you have your consolation" (*Lk. vi. 24*); whereby he evidently teaches, that we cannot have our consolation both here and hereafter. And this same truth he has most strikingly exemplified in the parable of that rich man, who, after having "feasted sumptuously every day,...died, and was buried in hell." And there, in sorrows which must be perpetual, that rich man "cried and said: Father

Abraham, send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said to him : Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life-time, and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." (*Lk.* xvi. 19.) Observe, my Brethren, and ponder well the only cause which is here assigned for the joy of the one, and the sorrow of the other : "Remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life-time, and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but *now* he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Do not then deceive yourselves ; for "no one (as St. Augustine says) can receive his consolation in both worlds—no one can have his enjoyment both here and hereafter ; but whoever wishes to possess the one, must necessarily consent to resign the other." (*Solil. c.* xxii.)

POINT II.
The example
of our Lord.

The way to heaven, then, is the way of suffering ; and this is what our blessed Lord has taught us, both in word and work. For

there is no duty which he more frequently inculcates in the Gospel, nor upon which he more strongly insists, than that of *denying ourselves*. "If any man will come after me, (he says,) let him *deny himself*." (*Mt.* xvi. 24.) "Except you ~~do penance~~, you shall all likewise perish." (*Lk.* xiii. 3, 5.) "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." (*Mt.* xi. 12.)

POINT III. This Example of our blessed
The example Lord is what the Saints, in every
of his Saints. age, have endeavoured to copy ;
 and they made it their study and
delight to do so. They sought no other path than
that which their Saviour had taught them, and had
traced out for them ; they desired no other. Read
their Lives, and you will find therein nothing more
conspicuous than their utter contempt of the plea-
sures which this world offers to amuse its deluded
votaries—you will find no trait in their lives more
strongly marked, than their *joy* whenever they were
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and self-denial was manifest to all that knew them.
They kept their eyes fixed on the example of their
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ing to the pattern which was shown them on the mount." (*Exod.* xxv. 40.)

And will *you*, my Brethren, professing to be followers of the same crucified Jesus, deviate from that royal path which he has himself marked out for you ; and which all his faithful followers, who have gone before you, have courageously pursued ? Will you not rather generously resolve to imitate their glorious example, by cheerfully taking up your Cross to follow your Redeemer ?

POINT IV.

~~M~~ortification brings with it the purest joy during life.

And think not, my Brethren, that this path of ~~Mortification~~ and self-denial is so rugged, so devoid of comfort, as the world would imagine. For the truly mortified Christian has much less to suffer, than they who give full scope to their desires by catching at every gratification that comes in their way. The more any one seeks his happiness and satisfaction here, the greater portion does he find of bitterness and affliction of spirit. But not so with those who despise the pleasures and gratifications of this world, and strive to render their lives conformable to that of their crucified Redeemer. For such, even in this life, receive from his bountiful hand the sweets of his heavenly consolations ; and in proportion to the ardour with which they take up their cross, and follow him, so much the more abundantly does he bestow upon them his special gifts and graces. "According to the multi-

tude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts (O Lord) have given joy to my soul." (*Ps. xciii. 19.*)

This has been experienced by the Saints in every age. Thus, St. Paul, who was accustomed to "chastise his body and bring it into subjection," says of himself: "I rejoyce in my sufferings" (*Col. i. 24*): "I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly abound with joy in all my tribulation." (*2 Cor. vii. 4.*) And of the Faithful of Macedonia he says in his Epistle to the Corinthians: "We make known unto you, brethren, the grace of God that hath been given in the Churches of Macedonia; that, in much experience of tribulation, they have had abundance of joy." (*2 Cor. viii. 1, 2.*)

The same was also experienced by St. Francis Xavier, who, amidst the greatest labours, and sufferings, and earthly privations, endured in India for the sake of Christ, was so filled with heavenly consolations, that he would frequently exclaim: "It is enough, O Lord! it is enough!" At other times, he would say: "O my God! give me not so much joy and comfort in this life! or if, by an excess of mercy, thou wilt heap it upon me; take me to thyself, and make me partaker of thy glory: for he who has once tasted thy sweetness, must necessarily find life too bitter, so long as he is deprived of the sight of thee!"

When was language like this ever heard to proceed from the lips of any man who seeks his happiness in the pleasures of this life? Whenever was such a one known to receive from his earthly enjoyments such satisfaction, as to be able to say from

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And so perfectly did he conform his life to his teaching, that he verified in himself those predictions, wherein the Prophet Isaias represents him as “despised, and the most abject of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity ;...who gave his body to the strikers, and his cheeks to them that plucked them ; who turned not away his face from them that rebuked him, and spit upon him.” (*Is. liii. 3 ; and l. 6.*) His whole life was a continued succession of sufferings, and his death was unparalleled in the cruelty of the torments which he voluntarily underwent, “leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.” (*1 Pet. ii. 21.*)

POINT III.
The example
of his Saints.

This Example of our blessed Lord is what the Saints, in every age, have endeavoured to copy ; and they made it their study and delight to do so. They sought no other path than that which their Saviour had taught them, and had traced out for them ; they desired no other. Read their Lives, and you will find therein nothing more conspicuous than their utter contempt of the pleasures which this world offers to amuse its deluded votaries—you will find no trait in their lives more strongly marked, than their *joy* whenever they were found worthy to suffer something for the sake of Christ ; so that their love of habitual mortification and self-denial was manifest to all that knew them. They kept their eyes fixed on the example of their divine Model, “endeavouring to do all things accord-

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When was language like this ever heard to proceed from the lips of any man who seeks his happiness in the pleasures of this life? Whenever was such a one known to receive from his earthly enjoyments such satisfaction, as to be able to say from

his heart: "It is enough?" On the contrary, what is more common in the world, than to hear people complaining that they are restless and unhappy? But we see that such satisfaction *is* enjoyed by those, who comply with that precept of their Saviour: "Deny thyself; take up thy cross, and follow me." (*Mt. xvi. 24.*)

If hitherto, my Brethren, you have neglected the salutary practice of mortification—if you have lived according to the flesh by habitually gratifying your senses, resolve now at least to "mortify your members which are upon the earth"—to "crucify the flesh with its vices and concupiscences," that you may thereby, like St. Paul, "fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in your flesh." (*Colos. iii. 5; i. 24; Gal. v. 24.*)

Bear in mind that the present life is but short; whilst that which is soon to succeed it, will continue for ever; and let this thought encourage you in all your ~~mortifications and~~ self-denials, with the assured hope that they will "work for you above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." (*2 Cor. iv. 17.*) And when they have worked that glory for you, and brought you to its secure possession, oh! how "your heart shall then rejoice" for every act of mortification which you will have performed for the love of God! how will your joy at the remembrance of them impel you to exclaim, as St. Peter of Alcantara did to St. Teresa, immediately after his death: "O happy penance! which has merited for me so great a glory!"

4th of April 1855

SERMON XXVII.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

ON PERSEVERANCE IN VIRTUE.

"Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."
(James i. 17.)

POINT I. All the gifts of God are good and precious : but with regard to the present life, when we look upon it as a time of danger, and as a certain period allotted to us for our trial ; and with regard to the next life also, when considered as a reward of virtue, depending on our fidelity in God's service ; no gift of God can be more precious to us, more desirable, or necessary, than that of perseverance : because, without this, all other gifts, however great or desirable in themselves, would be of no advantage to us in the end ; or, rather, they would turn to our disadvantage, since they would serve to bring upon us a severer condemnation.

There is no gift of God, therefore, for the obtaining and preserving of which, we should be more

frequent and more earnest in our supplications to him, whom we know to be the Giver of all good gifts. It is on this subject, therefore, that I intend now to address you.

Perseverance in virtue is that gift of God, whereby we are enabled to bear up against all the difficulties, and to stand our ground against all the temptations to which we may be exposed : it enables us to gain a complete victory over all the enemies of our salvation : it conducts us steadily along the path of virtue, daily increasing our store of merits, till it brings us safe, at last, to the end of our labours, when it crowns our fidelity in God's service with the reward of eternal life : "Be thou faithful unto death ; and I will give thee the crown of life." (*Apoc. ii. 10.*)

POINT II.

Necessity of
perseverance.

The present life is a time of trial. We are placed here, in this vale of tears, for a short time, in order that we may labour, by diligence and fidelity in God's service, to render ourselves worthy of the glory which he has prepared for us. And how can this be otherwise accomplished, than by a constant and persevering obedience to the God who made us ? For, of little avail will it be to us in the end, to have made a good beginning—to have even acquired great and exalted virtues, and practised them for years ; if, after all this, we renounce our allegiance to God, and enlist ourselves under the standard of satan. It is not by the zeal and

fervour with which we enter upon the service of God, that we testify to him the constancy and firmness of our determination to serve him ; but it is by the zeal and fervour with which we *persevere* in his service. For, we naturally enter upon any new affair of importance, with eagerness and solicitude ; but if, for years, we pursue the same object with equal eagerness and solicitude, we then prove that we engaged in it, not from fickleness of disposition, or a desire of novelty, but from real and solid motives, and with a full determination to accomplish the business we took in hand.

It is this constant, steady perseverance in virtue, that completes a Christian life. For indeed, if, after having gained many and great victories over our spiritual enemies—over the devil, the world, and the flesh, and advanced to a considerable height up the ladder of perfection, we unhappily stop or turn back, before we have arrived at the top, we can have no claim to that splendid and never-fading crown of glory, which is promised to such only as persevere faithfully to the end : “Be thou faithful unto death ; and I will give thee the crown of life.”

POINT III.
Wretchedness
of those who
lose this gift.

Most truly lamentable is the condition of those souls who are wanting in this essential duty of perseverance in virtue. For such unhappy Christians, as fail in this essential point, lose the grace and friendship of their Creator, they forfeit their title to the kingdom of

heaven, and, even though they should rise again from their fall, they create for themselves new difficulties, and throw many fearful obstacles in the way of their salvation. Those habits of virtue, which they had with difficulty formed, after many years, perhaps, spent in religious practices, are very soon lost, and are quickly replaced by habits of vice ; the passions acquire daily new strength, temptations become more violent and frequent, and the enemy gains every day greater hold on the powers of the soul.

Such is the deplorable state of those, who, after having entered upon God's service, fail to persevere, by falling back into their former sins. Oh ! how solicitous we should be to avoid so great a misfortune ! With what zeal, and fervour, therefore, ought we to implore the goodness of God to bestow upon us this precious, this necessary gift of perseverance—this gift upon which so entirely depends our future and eternal destiny ! and with what diligence should we employ the means of obtaining this inestimable gift !

POINT IV.

The means of obtaining this precious gift.

A complete diffidence of ourselves,—an humble fear of falling into this misfortune, is one necessary means of avoiding it. This fear, however, must be accompanied with an entire confidence in God.

Whatever may be our present state of soul—however pious and fervent we may be—to whatever

degree of virtue or sanctity we may have arrived, we can never be secure, nor presume to pronounce upon our future condition ; being forewarned, as we are, by the Apostle, that "he who thinketh himself to stand, must take heed, lest he fall." (1 *Cor.* x. 12.)

For, how many have there been, who seemed to have been possessed of eminent virtues, and to have made great progress in the science of the Saints ; but who have afterwards fallen off from their duty, and have plunged themselves into such a depth of misery—have drunk so deeply of the cup of iniquity, that the bare relation of their enormities would thrill with horror through the soul, and awaken most fearful apprehensions in the breast of every one, who has the affair of his salvation really at heart !

That such, my Brethren, may never be our lot, let us, like prudent and experienced travellers, make such a provision for our journey through the desert of this world, as will prevent us from fainting on the way ; and take such precautions, as will secure us from falling into the hands of our enemies. Let us, therefore, make a diligent use of those means which Religion prescribes, and which I have so frequently, on other occasions, pointed out to you. For thereby we shall be enabled to keep alive in our hearts the sentiments of piety ; we shall be supported in the performance of our various duties ; and strengthened in our resolution of persevering, to the end of our lives, in the course we have begun.

1. Let us, for instance, keep a constant watch over our senses, that they may not betray us into

sin ; and never cease from labouring to mortify our passions ; nor from leading a penitential life.

“The Christian life is a perpetual penance.”
(*Conc. Trid., Sess. xiv., c. 9.*)

2. Let us read and reflect, every day, upon such truths as Religion holds out to our frequent and serious consideration : “With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart.” (*Jer. xii. 11.*)

3. Let us be regular and diligent in all our duties and spiritual exercises ; especially in preparing ourselves frequently for receiving the Holy Sacraments, and in attending at Benediction.

4. Let our petitions ascend, every day, more frequently, and with increased fervour and humility, into the presence of God, imploring his grace and protection, and the gift of holy perseverance.

5. And in order that these petitions may not depart from the divine presence, till the Most High behold them—that we may not, through our own fault, render them ineffectual, let us be careful to correspond with every grace which he bestows upon us, and with such means of grace as he affords us.

Then, my Brethren, may we reasonably indulge the pleasing hope, that heaven will assist us—then, with a holy confidence, may we trust, that the assisting hand of God will be our support and protection, amidst all the difficulties and dangers of this life ; and will conduct us in safety to a happy eternity, where, in reward for our fidelity in his service, he will give us that “crown of life,” which he promises to those that persevere unto the end. (*Apoc. ii. 10.*)

SERMON XXVIII.

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

ON PRAYER, AS A MEANS OF PERSEVERANCE :
ITS NECESSITY ; ITS EFFICACY.

“Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.” (John xvi. 24.)

My beloved Brethren, in the innumerable dangers, difficulties, and temptations, which we must continually and necessarily meet with in this vale of tears, what can be more calculated to encourage, to strengthen and support us, than this gracious, this unlimited promise of our Redeemer : “Ask, and you shall receive ?” Oh ! how great, how incomprehensible is the goodness and liberality of God to man ! Not content with everything else that he has done for us, he would even place (he has placed) the very treasury of heaven at our disposal : “Ask, and you shall receive !”

But, though God is always ready, and has promised to bestow his graces upon us ; yet, he requires something to be done on our part, as a condition for obtaining them—he requires that we should pray for them. For he has appointed prayer as the channel, through which he communicates his mercies to us ; and without which he will not communicate them : “Ask, and you shall receive.” Observe, he

does not say : ‘ Whenever you stand in need, you shall receive ; ’ but ‘ whenever you ask ’—“ Ask, and you shall receive.”

POINT I. Prayer, then, is a duty required of us by the Institution and Command of God. And therefore, we must necessarily raise our supplicating voice towards heaven, and lay before God, in prayer, our wants and infirmities, in order to feel the effects of his mercy—if we would move God to look down upon us favourably from heaven, we must first raise our hearts up to him, by humble and fervent prayer. Thus it is that he obliges us to pay him, continually, the homage of our dependance.

But, even if God did not oblige us—if he had not commanded prayer ; nevertheless, as prayer is an effectual means of obtaining his help and protection, our own necessities would force us to apply to this necessary means of grace ; and to apply to it with the greatest diligence. For, if we are to regulate our application to a duty, by the urgency of the motives which it supplies, then there is no duty which more loudly calls for our application, than that of prayer ; nor for a more diligent application. For it is by *its* means, that we are to obtain the assistance of heaven, without which we cannot work out our salvation, nor even do the least thing towards it. For, as St. Paul says : “ We are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves : we depend entirely on the mercy and bounty of

God; all our good must come from him: "Our sufficiency (says the Apostle) is from God." (2 *Cor.* iii. 5.)

If we consider the present state of man: the strength and violence of his passions,—the many powerful solicitations to sin from the objects around him,—and the obstinate, unceasing attacks of his spiritual enemies, who, as St. Peter assures us, "are always going about, like roaring lions, seeking which of us they may devour" (1 *Pet.* v. 8): if (I say) we consider all this; and then reflect, that the only assistance we can have amidst all these dangers must come from God; and that the means of obtaining that assistance is prayer; can we want arguments to show us the necessity of prayer, or motives to urge us to have recourse to it? By its means, we shall be enabled to pass, uninjured, through all these dangers—we shall be secure in the very midst of temptations.

With reason, then, does St. Paul exhort us to "be instant in prayer"—to "pray without ceasing." (*Colos.* iv. 2; 1 *Thes.* v. 17.) For, whether we be saints, or sinners, prayer is the key which is to open to us the treasury of God's mercies.

1. For those, who are sinners—~~in the state of mortal sin~~, prayer is absolutely necessary, to enable them to arise from that unhappy state. Although, in punishment of past iniquities, even every other grace should be denied to any sinner; yet prayer is not denied him: it is a grace given to all; and, by making a proper use of it, the sinner can obtain all

that is necessary for his perfect conversion and reconciliation to God—for putting himself again in the state of grace. Are you not, then, inexcusable—do you not show an extreme indifference for salvation, if you neglect so easy a means as that of prayer? God offers you the grace of repentance, on condition that you ask for it in humble and fervent prayer: Thus the humble Publican only said to God: “O God, be merciful to me a sinner,” and our blessed Saviour declares, that “this man returned home justified.” (*Lk.* xviii. 13.) The penitent thief on the Cross did but say to his Redeemer: “Lord, remember me, when thou shalt come into thy kingdom;” and Jesus said to him: “Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise.” (*Lk.* xxiii. 43.) God is ready also to pardon you, my Brethren, as he was them; and he has supplied you with the same means of moving him to mercy. Make use, therefore, of this means: and then, like them, you will soon feel the effects of God’s mercy.

2. But if you have the happiness to be of the number of the just—if you are living in the state of grace, prayer is absolutely required for the preservation of this state: it is a necessary means for obtaining those particular graces, which are to enable you to persevere in virtue. We carry the grace of God in frail vessels (*2 Cor.* iv. 7): we are assailed continually by the violent storms of temptation—we are like a ship in the midst of a tempestuous ocean, exposed every moment to the danger of shipwreck: and whither are we to fly for safety and protection,

but to the throne of mercy, by casting ourselves at the feet of Christ; and, like the Apostles in the storm, addressing our earnest supplications to him, who is the only one that is able to “command the winds and the sea.” (*Mt. viii. 26.*)

We have to fight against cunning and experienced enemies, who are for ever planning our destruction—enemies both from within and without. Within are our passions, which are continually rebelling against the will of God; Without are the angels of darkness, who are constantly lying in wait for our souls to destroy them; and the world also, which is always seeking to draw us off from the service of God, and to involve us in the same eternal ruin with itself. In what fearful danger then we are, of yielding to the unceasing attacks of so many enemies, unless we are supported by a particular grace of God! And how are we to obtain that particular grace, but by prayer? Where are we to find a safe protection from our enemies, but in the arms of our God, entreating him, by our repeated supplications, to defend us against their attacks? For, as Moses obtained by prayer a complete victory over the enemies of Israel (*Exod. xvii. 11*); so we, by the same means, may “extinguish the fiery darts of the most wicked one” (*Eph. vi. 16*), and may gain a complete victory over all the enemies of our salvation. For, in all our temptations, prayer will either deliver or preserve us; in our afflictions, it will be our comfort and support; and in all our necessities, it will be our relief.

POINT II. Have recourse to it, my Brethren,
 Prayer is on all occasions : at all times, and in
 efficacious. all places, God is present with us, to
 receive our petitions ; and he will
 grant our requests, when we present them to him
 in the true spirit of Religion.

For prayer, when it proceeds from proper dispositions of heart, possesses such influence with God, that it cannot go unrewarded—it offers a kind of violence to heaven ; and seems, as it were, to constrain the Almighty to mercy. This he has shown, in a very striking manner, in his conduct towards the Israelites. For, when they had adored the golden calf, and, by this crime, had excited his anger against them ; he said to Moses who was yet with him on Mount Sinai : “ I see that this people is stiff-necked : let me alone (that is, do not pray for them)—let me alone, that my wrath may be enkindled against them ; and that I may destroy them.”

“ But Moses (says the Sacred Text) besought the Lord his God.” And such was the efficacy of his prayer, that, although God had resolved to destroy the guilty Israelites, yet before Moses descended from the mountain, the Scripture assures us : “ The Lord was appeased from doing the evil which he had spoken against his people.” (*Exod. xxxii.*)

It was the influence of prayer (St. Stephen's), that moved the Almighty to work the conversion of St. Paul ; and, from a violent persecutor of the

Church of God, to change him into a zealous Apostle—into a vessel of election, to carry the name of Christ to distant nations. It was the influence of prayer (St. Monica's), that rescued St. Augustine from that abyss of error and vice, into which he was plunged, to make him one of the brightest ornaments of Christ's spiritual kingdom. And, in fact, prayer daily serves as an ever-glowing torch, by which the flames of divine love are enkindled even in the frozen heart of many an obdurate sinner.

Since, then, prayer is so effectual in obtaining from God what we ask for, whence comes it, that amongst so many Christians, who apply daily to the exercise of prayer, there are so very few that really amend their lives? that so few effectually overcome the particular passions to which they are inclined? and that vice reigns so generally amongst them? Has the Almighty changed in their regard? have his promises failed? or his mercies and bounty ceased to flow? No, my Brethren; God is always the same—infinite in goodness, rich in mercy, and always ready to exercise these attributes in favour of man.

But the reason why these Christians receive not the effect of their prayers, is, either because the things for which they pray, or their manner of praying for them, are not such as are calculated to move God to grant their petitions: As St. James says, they do not receive, because they do not ask in a proper manner: "They ask, and receive not,

because they ask amiss." (*James* iv. 3.) They pray the same as those Jews did, of whom our blessed Lord says, that "they honoured God with their lips; but their heart was far from him." (*Mt.* xv. 8.)

In order, then, to render your petitions effectual with God, you must present them to him in the manner he requires; that is, you must pray in the name of Christ;—you must pray also with attention,—with a firm confidence in God's goodness and promises,—with humility of heart,—and with perseverance. These are the necessary conditions of prayer; and they are a subject of very great importance, deserving your most attentive consideration. To explain them fully on the present occasion would detain you too long; I must therefore defer the explanation of them for the present.

Let me exhort you, however, to reflect, in the meantime, upon what has been said: upon the strict necessity of prayer,—upon the great advantages to be derived from it,—and upon its powerful efficacy in moving God to mercy. And may these reflections make you both diligent in having recourse to this necessary—this powerful means of salvation; and also careful in always joining with your prayers the dispositions which have just been mentioned. Your prayers will then be acceptable to the Almighty; they will make you pleasing in his sight, and obtain for you such a continual and plentiful supply of graces in this life, as will bring you to the possession of eternal happiness in the next.

SERMON XXIX.

Sixth Sunday after Easter.

ON PRAYER, AS A MEANS OF PERSEVERANCE :
THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER.

“Most dearly Beloved : Be prudent, and watch in prayers.” (1 Pet. iv. 7.)

From instructions delivered to you on former occasions, I trust you are convinced of the absolute necessity, and the great advantages of prayer ;—that you see the importance of the admonition of the Apostle, just quoted to you from this day’s Epistle : “Be prudent, and watch in prayers ;—that, as the same Apostle exhorts, you will “in all things, by prayer and supplication, let your petitions be made known unto God” (*Phil.* iv. 6) ;—and that you will never allow any obstacle to withdraw you from this necessary and important duty ; for there can be no excuse sufficient to justify a neglect of prayer.

But you will perhaps say, that you have oftentimes begged of God to deliver you from the evils, which hang heavy upon you ; or to give you some blessing, of which you stand in need ; but that you

have not derived from your prayers the benefit you sought. My Brethren, this may easily be the case : it is precisely what St. James tells the Christians, whom he was addressing, when he said : “ You ask, and receive not ;” and he immediately gives the reason of their failure : “ You receive not (he says), because you ask amiss.” (*James* iv. 3.) These words of the Apostle clearly show, that it is not sufficient merely to pray ; but that you must pray in a proper manner, if you would have your petitions granted.

How, then, must you pray ? This very important question, I will now endeavour to answer.

In order that your prayers may be effectual in obtaining what you ask for, God requires that you should present them to him, accompanied with certain conditions : he requires that you should pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who says : “ If you shall ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it to you” (*John* xvi. 23) ;—that you should pray also with attention,—with a firm confidence in his goodness and promises,—with humility of heart,—and with perseverance.

POINT I. In order to pray *in the name of*
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 prayer. For, what is prayer, but "the raising up
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 conversation between us and our Creator, in which
 we supplicate his mercy, and implore his gifts and
 graces ? Now, whenever we allow our mind to
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 other things, our prayer certainly ceases to be
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 pleasing God, offends him." And alas ! is it not
 thus that the greater part of Christians pray ? Do
 not their prayers proceed merely from the lips ?
 Their mouth indeed speaks, but their heart is silent ;
 and therefore, God, who looks chiefly to the heart,
 rejects their petitions.

I do not however mean to say, that all distractions in prayer are sinful ; far from it. For, in spite of all our endeavours to keep our attention fixed, we shall find ourselves frequently distracted. But, then, so long as these distractions are involuntary, and we endeavour to banish them as soon as we perceive them, they are not sinful—none will be laid to our charge, but such only as are wilful. And, in order

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 so long as these distractions are involuntary, and we
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 them, they are not sinful—none will be laid to our
 charge, but such only as are wilful. And, in order

to avoid these, you must follow the advice of the Wise Man, who says : " Before prayer, prepare thy soul ; and be not as a man that tempteth God" (*Ecclus.* xviii. 23) ; that is, before you begin your prayer, disengage your heart, as far as you can, from all over-attachment to creatures ; and endeavour to recollect yourselves, by calling to mind the presence of God, and that you are about to speak to him, before whom even the heavens tremble. Without some such preparation as this, you cannot expect to pray with attention. If, therefore, you are culpably negligent in this important point, can your distractions be considered as involuntary ; and not rather, as the natural effect of your negligence ?

POINT III.

3. **With Confidence.**

Besides attention, you must also pray with a firm confidence in the goodness and promises of God. In all your prayers, therefore, you should bear in mind that immense goodness, which is ever ready to listen to the just requests of those who present their petitions with due confidence. You should bear in mind also our Lord's positive and repeated promises, wherein he pledges his sure word, that he will grant whatever we ask of him with proper confidence.

Thus will you be enabled to lay aside all mistrust, and to pray with the confidence he requires ; and this confidence of being heard will strengthen and perfect your desire of the blessings you implore, and will thus render your prayers more fervent. For,

in vain would you pray, if a desire of being heard did not render your prayers fervent ; or if you used no endeavours, on your part, to render them effectual : since, without this, your confidence would be no better than presumption ; whereas, it ought to be accompanied with sincere humility of heart, which is also one of the necessary qualities of prayer.

POINT IV. In order to pray with humility,

4. **With** we must throw ourselves entirely upon
Humility. the mercy of God, acknowledging,
 from our heart, that whatever good

we may possess proceeds, not from ourselves in the least degree, but solely and entirely from the divine mercy and goodness. We have the blessings, both temporal and spiritual, which we enjoy, not because we are deserving of them, (for we deserve nothing but punishments, on account of our sins,) but we have them solely because God is good !

Let us, therefore, humble ourselves in the divine presence, "confessing against ourselves our injustices to the Lord." (*Ps. xxxi. 5.*) Let us lay before him our sins, our weaknesses, and all our miseries, and cry to him for deliverance. For, can man, groaning under the common depravity of human nature,—a compound of pride, sensuality, and ignorance,—and whatever progress he may have made in virtue, still subject to a thousand weaknesses ; can *he* assume any other language to his offended God, than that of an humble supplicant, crying for mercy ? Can he adopt the haughty tone of the Pharisee, priding

himself upon his own supposed good works ? and not rather, like the humble Publican, with down-cast eyes, and striking his breast, exclaim : “ O God, be merciful to me, a sinner ” ? (*Lk. xviii. 13.*) Oh ! this, my Brethren, is the perfection of prayer—the true eloquence of the heart ! this it is that disarms the anger of the Almighty, and moves him powerfully to mercy ! For, “ the prayer of him that humbleth himself, (says the Sacred Scripture,) shall pierce the clouds ; and he will not depart, till the Most High behold.” (*Ecclus. xxxv. 21.*) For, whilst God sends the proud empty away, “ to the humble he giveth grace.” (*1 Pet. v. 5.*)

Therefore, my Brethren, whenever you go to present your petitions to the throne of mercy, humble yourselves before the Lord your God ; and pray to him with the other dispositions that have just been explained ; to which you must join also a steady perseverance.

POINT V. This perseverance in prayer is
 5. And with what our Lord teaches us, when he
 Perseverance. says : “ You ought always to pray, and not to faint.” (*Lk. xviii. 1.*) It is what he shows forth also, in a striking manner, by his own example, when, retiring from his disciples, he went to the mountains, and there spent even whole nights “ in the prayer of God” (*Lk. vi. 12*) ; and still more in the Garden of Gethsemani, when he knelt down three times to offer the self-same prayer. Indeed, there is nothing which

our blessed Saviour seems more earnest in impressing upon our minds, than to persevere, with an humble confidence, in our prayers to God.

The example of the Chananee woman, and our Saviour's conduct towards her, are related by the Evangelist, to show the happy fruits of perseverance in prayer. She went to our blessed Lord to petition for the cure of her daughter, who was possessed by an evil spirit.

When first she presented her petition to him, saying : "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David ;" he appeared totally to disregard her : "He answered her not a word," says the Evangelist. She, however, persisted in her request ; but still he refused to listen to it, as having nothing at all to do with her ; for he said : "I was not sent, but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel." Could she have received a more positive refusal ? Yet, far from being discouraged at this complete disregard of her petition, she persevered with still greater fervour. For, falling down at his feet, she humbled herself before him : "She came, (says the Evangelist,) and worshipped him, saying : Lord, help me." Still, he appeared to be unmoved ; for "he answered, and said : It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs." Not in the least disturbed at this (seemingly contemptuous) treatment of her Redeemer, she humbled herself the more,—she persevered still,—she became more ardent in her request,—and even turned what he had said into her own favour : "Yea, Lord, (she said) ; for the

whelps also do eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters ;” that is to say, ‘I acknowledge myself to be a most worthless, wretched creature ; deserving to be treated, not as a child, but as a dog : let me, then, have at least what falls to the portion of dogs ; “for the whelps also are allowed to eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters.”’ Oh ! here the tender heart of our Redeemer could conceal itself no longer ! The justice of her petition,—her fervour,—her humility,—her confidence,—and her perseverance, had such influence with him, that, turning to her, he said : “O woman ! great is thy faith ! be it done unto thee, as thou wilt !” (*Mt.* xv. 28.)

What an encouragement have we here, my Brethren, to make us persevere in prayer ! to make us never grow weary, but continue knocking at the door of divine Mercy, till it be opened unto us ! What an inducement, also, to make us rather increase our fervour, our humility, and our confidence in God, when he seems not to hear us ; with a full persuasion, that perseverance will at last obtain the grant of our request.

Therefore, my Brethren, do not lose courage ; but persevere in your prayer, with an humble confidence that God will hear you in the end. And then you will not fail to receive the happy fruits of your perseverance, from a God who is all goodness and mercy,—who delights in bestowing his blessings upon you,—and who only withholds them for a time, that he may grant them afterwards more to

your advantage, and as a reward of your very perseverance. "Do not therefore lose confidence, (says St. Paul,) which hath a great reward." (*Heb. x. 35.*)

As your wants and your miseries cease not, but with your life ; let your supplications also cease not ; but daily and hourly present them to the throne of mercy ; present them with the dispositions which have just been explained ; and endeavour to become truly men of prayer. And then, like David, you will become also men "according to God's own heart" (*Acts. xiii. 22*) ; enabled to "run with ease along the path of his commandments." (*Ps. cxviii. 32.*) Then you will be "like to the tree, that is planted by a stream of running waters, whose leaf shall always be green, and whose fruit shall appear in due season." (*Ps. i. 3.*) Then will you proceed securely in the path of virtue, which the Saints have marked out for you. And though there should be given to you, as there was to St. Paul, "a sting of the flesh—an angel of satan, to buffet you ;" by imitating the fervour and perseverance, with which he "thrice besought the Lord, that it might depart from him," you, like him, will find, that "the grace of God is sufficient for you." (*2 Cor. xii. 9.*) And, whilst "a thousand fall by your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, evil shall not come near you ; but "abiding under the protection of the God of heaven" (*Ps. xc. 1, 7*), you will be enabled so to live, as to pass, at your death, full of merits, from this vale of tears to the possession of a glorious immortality, in the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON XXX.

W h i t s u n d a y .

ON THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION : ITS MIRACULOUS
ESTABLISHMENT, AND ITS STABILITY.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost ; and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.” (Acts ii. 4.)

Our blessed Saviour, after having purchased our Redemption by his death upon the Cross, raised himself to life again on the third day, thereby proving that the Religion which he taught was true and divine ; and before he ascended into heaven, he commissioned and empowered his Apostles to teach to the whole world the same doctrines, which he had taught them, the truth of which he had established by the most astonishing miracles.

Ten days after his Ascension into heaven—on this day of Pentecost, he sent down upon his Apostles the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, to “endue

them with power from on high" (*Lk.* xxiv. 49), to "guide them into all truth" (*John* xvi. 13), and to "abide with them for ever." (*John* xiv. 16, 17.)

POINT I.

The miraculous establishment of the Church.

Enlightened and animated by this divine Spirit, the Apostles commence their important mission : they boldly declare to the Jews, that Jesus, whom they had put to death, is truly the Son of God—the Saviour of mankind, by whom alone they can expect to be saved. (*Acts* ii. 22 to 34 ; iv. 12.)

The Scribes and Pharisees, and the powers of the Jewish nation rise up against the Apostles, and forbid them to preach any more in the Name of Jesus, threatening them, and casting them into prison. (*Acts* iv. 18, 21 ; v. 18, 30, 31.) So far from being intimidated or discouraged by this opposition, "they went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the Name of Jesus." (*Acts* v. 40, 41.) And no sooner do they recover their liberty, than they again teach publicly the doctrines of Jesus (*Acts* v. 28), and they prove the truth of what they teach, (as their divine Master had done,) by the miracles which they were enabled to work in the Name of Jesus. (*Acts* iii. 6, 7 ; ix. 34 ; xiv. 9.) Their preaching, thus supported by evident miracles, is everywhere successful. On the very day of Pentecost, by Peter's first Sermon, three thousand are converted to the faith ; and by his second

Sermon, five thousand. (*Acts* ii. 41 ; iv. 4.) At the voice of the Apostles, vast multitudes everywhere declare themselves the disciples of Jesus ; so that St. Paul could say to the Romans, and to the Colossians, even in his time, that their faith was known in the whole world." (*Rom.* i. 8 ; *Col.* i. 5, 6.)

Thus, in a few years, and by the preaching of twelve poor illiterate men, the whole face of the universe is changed ; the temples of paganism are deserted, and their idols overturned ; a new people is formed ; and the great Sacrifice of the New Law, prefigured by so many ancient ceremonies, and so frequently foretold by the Prophets, is everywhere celebrated. And thus the Religion of Jesus Christ, which is so contradictory to the natural inclinations and passions of mankind, and which promises nothing in this life but crosses and persecutions, is firmly established, and, like the grain of mustard-seed, it increases so as to fill the whole earth. (*Mt.* xiii. 31, 32.)

Christ admonished his Apostles, that he sent them "as sheep in the midst of wolves" (*Mt.* x. 16) ; and they accordingly made meekness and patience their only defence, under every persecution that was raised against them. The pretended religions of Mahomet ~~and of the Reformation~~ were established by earthly power, by human authority, by compulsion, by fines and penalties against those who refused to comply ; but the true Religion of Christ is established by persuasion, by meekness, and by patient suffering.

In vain do earthly kings and emperors each day invent and execute upon the Faithful the most

cruel torments, and every kind of death. Amidst all these trials and persecutions, the Faith of the Apostolic Church remains unshaken. The blood of each Martyr that suffered seemed, like a fruitful seed, to produce crowds of new converts, ready, in like manner, to suffer for the Faith ; so that, notwithstanding the thousands of Christians that were put to death during the first three ages, so far was the Church of the Apostles from being destroyed, or even weakened, by all this violence, that she increased daily ; kings and emperors, together with their subjects, becoming Christians.

Thus, the Christian Religion, which, considered in its opposition to human passions, must be, of all things, the most difficult to persuade men to embrace, was nevertheless established all over the world by the sole means of persuasion, in spite of all the opposition of earthly powers and interests, of policy and violence. And this Religion, so pure, so contrary to the passions of men, produces in those who embrace it so strong and firm a conviction, that they are ready, and even esteem themselves happy, to give their very life in testimony of the truth of the doctrines which they profess. No sooner do they receive the Faith of Christ, than they make every sacrifice that can serve to show their attachment and fidelity to it. This, my Brethren, is certainly no natural effect, but one that must come from the hand of God : and it shows that the Ministry—the Apostles and their lawful successors, who are the immediate instru-

ments in producing this effect, are divinely appointed ; and that the Religion, which they teach, is true and divine.

But, not only does this miraculous *establishment* of the Church by the Apostles, and its astonishing progress under their immediate successors, show that it is the work of God ; but its *stability* also is a standing and practical proof of the same.

POINT II. Christ declared that he built
 The stability his Church upon a rock, and that
 of the Church. the gates of hell, or the powers of
 darkness, should never prevail
 against it. (*Mt. xvi. 18.*) He committed the office
 of teaching the Doctrines of this Church to the
 Apostles, as his ministers, and through them to
 their successors ; and he declared, that he would
 “be with them” in their teaching “all days even
 to the end of the world.” (*Mt. xxviii. 19, 20.*) He
 promised, moreover, that he would send them “the
 Spirit of Truth” to “abide with them for ever,”
 and “to teach them all truth.” (*John xiv. 16, 17 ;*
xvi. 13.)

The Apostles, under this promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, delivered the sacred deposit of Faith, pure and unadulterated, to their immediate Successors in the Ministry ; and thus, in the Catholic Church, the Doctrines of Christ have been handed down, whole and entire, pure and undefiled, from one generation to another, to the present day ; and so they will continue to be handed down to the end

of time. And in making this assertion, we rest, with perfect security, on those promises of Eternal Truth to which I have just referred. This (I say) proves the truth and divinity of our Religion; because it proves its Apostolicity, and that it exists under the promised protection of divine Providence.

Yes, my Brethren, the stability and perpetual existence of the Catholic Church can be the work of no other than the Almighty. She beholds everything around her—laws, customs, nations, and empires, and the varied religions that have sprung from the reformation, all undergoing change; herself alone remaining immoveable and unchangeable, as is the God whom she adores. Satan has in every age raised up and employed his agents against this Church of all ages, as Christ and his Apostles foretold. Yes, the rains have fallen, the floods have come, the winds have blown, and they have beat upon this Church; and it has not fallen, “for it is founded upon a rock.” (*Mt. vii. 25.*)

Scarcely had the Church begun to enjoy the sweets of peace by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, when crowds of malignant heresies began to raise against her a more destructive war, than the sword of persecution had ever done: but still the Church stands firm and immoveable; and, indeed, this opposition of her enemies only added to her lustre, by calling forth from her Ministers a fuller and clearer explanation of the doctrines attacked.

The true Religion of Christ, thus always attacked,

but never vanquished, is then a standing proof that she "abides under the protection of the God of heaven." In the midst of human things, all of which feel the ravages of time, she alone feels them not : she alone, firmly established on an impregnable rock, can, in conscious security, frown down defiance on all her foes. The more violent the waves are that dash against her, the more sensible she is of being under the protecting hand of the Almighty. It is according to the plan of divine Providence to furnish her with combats ; but these combats are only the preparatives of her triumphs.

How consoling for the members of the Church to have the assurance of Truth itself, that she is thus proof against all the storms and tempests that may be raised against her ! The enemies of the Church, however powerful they may be in themselves, are like those sudden torrents that rush from the mountains : they rage furiously for a time, and threaten to destroy all before them ; but they all pass away, and disappear as if they had never been. We know this to have been the case with all the ancient heresies ; and it must be the case sooner or later with those of the present day. When heresies, therefore, or persecutions rage against the Church, and seem for a time to gain ground here and there, we need not be under any apprehension for the safety of the Church ; because her divine Founder has declared that he built his Church upon a rock, and that the gates of hell should never prevail against her : and what power is there, that can

render his words of no effect? What folly then to attack this Church of all ages and of all nations, thus secured, as she is, under the promised protection of her divine Founder!

O my Brethren! how inestimable is the favour which God has conferred upon you in selecting and making you members of his true Church! Oh! thank him from your hearts for this special and most precious blessing! Beg of him an inviolable attachment to the Doctrines which his Church teaches, and an exact fidelity to her precepts; that, after having loved and served him faithfully in the Church Militant on earth, you may go to enjoy him eternally in the Church Triumphant in heaven.

SERMON XXXI.

Trinity Sunday.

ON CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

In the Gospel of the present Festival, Jesus Christ, as our Teacher, points out to us the supreme Rule of all sanctity, and also the efficacious means whereby we are enabled to follow that Rule. For the Rule of all sanctity is *the holy will of God*, which is expressed by our blessed Lord when he says: "All things whatsoever I have commanded you;" and the efficacious means of observing this divine Rule is *the grace of God*, which we are to obtain by receiving the *Sacraments* established in the Church, and also by constantly addressing our *prayers* to him who assures us, that he is with us at all times, and that he is always ready to hear and grant our petitions, when we call upon him for help: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the world." "Ask, and you shall receive." (*John* xvi. 24.)

POINT I. The holy Will of God, then, being the supreme Rule of all sanctity, it follows that Christ, who came to be our *Model*, as well as our Redeemer, made it the invariable rule of his life. And accordingly, the Psalmist (*Ps. xxxix. 7, 8, 9*), when speaking of our Lord's first coming into this world to dwell amongst us, represents him as thus addressing his heavenly Father: "Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire ; then said I : Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will : O my God, I have desired it, and thy law, in the midst of my heart."

Now, what was thus written of Christ, as our Model, must of course be also written of us. 'In the head, therefore, that is, in the very *beginning* of the book of our life, it is written of us that we should do the will of our heavenly Father ;' and he expressly tells us that it is his will, that we should hear and obey the teaching of his beloved Son : "This is my beloved Son, he says, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him." (*Mt. xvii. 5.*)

Christ, then, is our Teacher ; and we, as his disciples, must learn and practise what he teaches—we must learn "to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded us." He teaches us by his own example, as well as by his words, to do the Will of God. "I came down from heaven, he says, not to do my *own will* ; but the will of him that sent me." (*John vi. 38.*) Every one of his disciples, therefore,

must say in like manner: 'I came into this world, not to do my own will; but the will of him that sent me hither.' This was the rule of Christ, our Teacher, and our Model; and it must be our rule also. "I cannot do anything of myself, he says again, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." (*John* v. 30.) "For I do always the things that please him." (*John* viii. 29.) "In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and thy law, in the midst of my heart." (*Psa.* xxxix. 8.) "Not my will, but thine be done." (*Lk.* xxii. 42.) St. Paul tells us, that, in conforming to the will of his heavenly Father, "Christ became obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross." (*Phil.* ii. 8.)

POINT II.
Christ teaches
conformity by
his Precepts.

This, then, was the whole life of Christ, our Teacher and our Model; and it must be the whole life also of every good Christian.

For "not every one that saith to me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, *he* shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." (*Mt.* vii. 21.)

Indeed, it is so essential to sanctity, that we should conform to the will of God, that, without this, we cannot please God by anything else. Thus, we read of the Jews, that, when they betook themselves to fasting in order to move God to mercy,

but perceived not from their fast the fruit they expected, they complained to God by saying : "Why have we fasted, and thou hast not regarded? why have we humbled our souls, and thou hast not taken notice?" He told them the reason why : "Behold, he says, in the day of your fast your *own* will is found." (*Is. lviii. 3.*)

On one occasion, when Christ was preaching to the people, one of them said to him : "Behold thy Mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee. But he answering said to them : Who is my Mother, and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the *will of my Father* who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (*Mt. xii. 47.*)

Thus, then, we have no other rule to follow, but the will of God. Christ, our Pattern, made it *his* rule so far, as even to call it the very food whereby he lived. For when his disciples, having brought him some food, asked him to eat, he said to them : "I have a meat to eat, which you know not—my meat is to do the will of him that sent me." (*John iv. 31.*)

To show us again how much he made the will of God his rule, and how much therefore it ought to be ours, he said on another occasion : "But that the world may know that I love the Father ; as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I." "For I do always the things that please him." (*John xiv. 31 ; viii. 29.*)

There is no other way of arriving at sanctity than this : unless we make our will conform to the will

of God—unless we strive “to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded,” it is impossible for us to become perfect. If God’s will and ours be in complete conformity, then we are perfect—then we are Saints. For if God’s will be holy, then ours, if conformable to his, must be holy also. But when our will is at variance with his, by refusing “to observe all things whatsoever he commands,” then we sin ; because our will is then in a state of rebellion against the will of God.

We must divest ourselves, therefore, of our own will : “If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*.” (Mt. xvi. 24.) We deny ourselves by laying aside our own will, or making it accord in every thing with the will of God. If we do this, then we are perfect—then we act according to God’s good pleasure ; for then we “do always the things that please him,” being perfectly resigned to all that he ordains, and receiving every thing from his hand with equal submission and thanksgiving, whether it be pleasure or pain.*

Thus, when Christ was in great affliction—when his “soul was sorrowful, even unto death,” he gives us an example of this perfect resignation to the divine will : “My Father, he said, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt...My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, *thy will* be done.” (Mt. xxvi. 39, 42.) Here, then, we see how Christ conformed to the will of his heavenly Father, not only in things pleasing to nature, but also in

* See p. 1. This Book, I had a-kerp's

pains—he resigned himself to die in the greatest sufferings, ignominy, and poverty, in conformity to what he knew to be the divine will ; for it is in this perfect conformity, that sanctity consists.

Therefore, my Brethren, study habitually what the will of God is in your regard. Be always resolved to comply with whatever you know his will to be ; and be most earnest in your daily supplications for the graces that are necessary for enabling you to fulfil your resolution. And then all your thoughts, words, and actions will be rendered supernatural and divine—your whole life will be in some manner like another life of Christ ; your death will also resemble his ; you will rise with him to everlasting life, and you will reign united with him in eternal glory.

SERMON XXXII.

The Second Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

“A certain man made a great supper, and invited many.” (Luke xiv. 16.)

In the whole life of our blessed Redeemer, there is no circumstance wherein he has more clearly manifested towards us the excess of his bounty and goodness, or given us a more striking proof of the tenderness of his love, than in the Institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, which is here signified by his “making a great supper, and inviting many.” And the solemn Octave of Corpus Christi, which we are still engaged in celebrating, has been appointed by the Church for the purpose of honouring our Lord in this institution of his love, and of testifying to him our gratitude for so inestimable a benefit.

POINT I.

Jesus feeds us with his own body and blood. "The hour being come, when he was to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end." (*John* xiii. 1.) And he exercised that love by giving us his own most sacred body and blood, as the tenderest pledge which unbounded charity could bestow. For, after eating the Paschal Lamb with his Apostles, and washing their feet, "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke; and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat: This is my body. And taking the chalice he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this: For this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins." (*Mt.* xxvi. 26, 27, 28.)

Oh! what a divine mystery of faith! what an abyss of mercy, of power, of love! At the words of Jesus, ~~bread is changed into his adorable body, and wine into his blood!~~ And by virtue of those same words, this miracle of bounty and love is daily renewed on our Altars!

What return of love does not this tender mercy of our divine Redeemer require from us! Can we ever do sufficient to testify our gratitude towards him?

We read in Ecclesiastical History, that our Forefathers, animated with love for their Redeemer, and excited by the feelings of a lively faith, crossed the seas in pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in order

to see the places which Christ has consecrated by his presence ; and that, when they beheld the Room wherein he had instituted the Blessed Eucharist,—the Garden wherein he had prayed in his agony of sorrow,—and Mount Calvary, where he had been crucified, their souls³ were filled with sentiments of gratitude and love,—their hearts were overwhelmed with feelings of tenderness and compassion, and tears of devotion flowed from their eyes ;—sinners were moved to lament their sins with feelings of true compunction, and to sincere resolutions of renouncing them for ever ;—the weak felt themselves encouraged, strengthened, and supported ;—and the virtuous became inflamed with more ardent desires of advancing in the path of perfection.

Oh ! let *us*, my Brethren, like them, reanimate our faith ! For, without travelling to such a distance—without crossing the seas, have we not *here* the same, and a much greater happiness ? far greater consolations ? For, what took place at the Last Supper, the same takes place in this temple—this Altar is, as it were, another Calvary, whereon Jesus is rendered present by the words of consecration, and is offered in Sacrifice to his eternal Father. It is a place which has been not merely *once* consecrated by his presence, but where he *continues* to reside with us perpetually.

Approach, then, to Jesus—present yourselves before him in the Holy Sacrament with a lively faith ; offer him your hearts with all the ardour of your devotion ; and make your petitions to him

with great fervour and confidence. He is still with *us*, as he was heretofore with his Apostles, renewing for us this mystery of love—changing bread and wine into his own body and blood, and giving us himself for the food of our souls. And thus he shows the truth of those words of Holy Scripture, that “his delight is to be with the children of men.” (*Prov. viii. 31.*)

POINT II. Jesus desires to be united with us.	As a means of animating yourselves with proper sentiments and feelings towards this sacred Institution of love, consider frequently, and more particularly during this
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~~Octave~~, the ardent, longing desire which our Lord has of being united with us in the Holy Communion.

“With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer.” (*Lk. xxii. 15.*) Jesus Christ expresses this longing desire, when he was on the point of giving us himself both for our food and our ransom. For he was about to institute that adorable Sacrifice and Sacrament, wherein our souls were to be fed with his own body and blood ; and to consummate that Sacrifice on the Cross, whereby the price of our ransom was to be paid. Those words, then, express the excess of his love towards us—they prove that we are the dear objects of his tenderest affection. Oh ! my Brethren, let us not show ourselves ungrateful to him, by undervaluing or neglecting so great a grace !

POINT III.

The return
we ought to
make him.

“With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer.” And shall not we desire also to eat it with him? For should not our desire of receiving him in

the Holy Communion be also ardent, so as to correspond with his? should we not be very fervent and diligent in preparing ourselves to receive frequently this life-giving Sacrament? for is it not the inexhaustible source of every blessing? is it not in this mystery of charity that he loves to communicate to us the abundant treasures of his infinite bounty? Are not our hearts made to love him? and is not this divine Sacrament a most efficacious means of enabling us to love him every day more and more perfectly, and of assisting us to testify our love by fervour and fidelity in his service?

But how is it, my Brethren, that the conduct of so many Christians shows, that they are devoid of such fervour? how is it that they are so cold and indifferent towards this Sacrament of God’s bounteous love, and so backward in preparing themselves to receive it? It is because, in order to feel the love of Jesus in this sacred Institution—in order to taste, and see that it is sweet to be united with him in the Holy Communion, we must purify our hearts from all such affections as are contrary to his love—we must mortify our earthly and carnal inclinations, and make to our blessed Lord a generous sacrifice of all that which would be an obstacle to the operations of his grace.

Let us, then, do so at once—let us put on that wedding garment, without which we cannot be pleasing or welcome guests. Yes, let us adorn our soul with the nuptial robe of charity, by the practice of solid virtue, that it may be a fit dwelling-place for Jesus Christ. Then our hearts will be in a proper state to receive him with joy; our souls will silently and sweetly listen to the voice of his grace; he will enrich us with his choicest blessings; and he will lovingly receive us to that happy union with himself, whereby we shall become one with him; so that we shall be enabled to say, in the words of St. Paul: “I live: now not I; but Christ liveth in me.” (*Gal.* ii. 20.) Because, by means of the abundant special graces received in the Holy Communion, we shall be enabled so to advance daily in virtue and perfection, that our future life will represent that of Jesus Christ, of which it will be a Copy.

SERMON XXXIII.

The Third Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

"You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains." (Isaias xii. 3.)

This day has been appointed by the Church for the celebration of a solemn Festival in honour of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus—that adorable Heart, which *has* loved and still *does* love us so much—that Furnace of Charity, the ardour of whose flames surpasses our comprehension.

POINT 1.	Should not the consideration of
Be devout to	this immense love for us inflame
the Heart of	our hearts with a corresponding
Jesus.	love? should it not excite in our
	souls a tender and loving devotion
	to the sacred and loving Heart of Jesus?

This is a devotion which is very pleasing to our blessed Lord; and the institution of the present Festival shows, that it is the wish of the Church to lead us to this devotion, by thus calling upon us to practise it.

Nothing can be more conformable to the spirit of Christianity, which is a Religion of love, than a tender devotion ~~to the Sacred Heart of~~ Jesus ; because this is essentially a devotion of love. For, when we contemplate that divine ~~Heart~~, which was formed to love us,—which never ceases to love us most tenderly,—and which so affectionately desires our happiness ; can we remain cold and indifferent—without feeling our hearts powerfully moved to a return of love ? or without being excited to a desire of testifying our love, by some *practice of devotion* to the divine Heart which loves us so much ?

POINT II.

The practice of
this Devotion.

What, then, is the *practice* of this devotion ? It is this :—

1. Let it be your regular habit. *to fly, on all occasions, to the Heart of Jesus for refuge ;* and to repose therein, with entire confidence, at all times, and under all circumstances. If you be distressed or afflicted, have recourse to ~~that commiserating Heart~~, from which flows the only real consolation you can have in this world. The hearts of *men* may indeed soften into sympathy—they may weep with you for a time ; but you know how inconstant they are, and that a continuance in affliction, in destitution, or in any distress which calls for their aid, soon deadens the feelings of their sympathy, and turns them from the objects which thus require their relief. Hasten, then, for relief to ~~the Heart of~~ Jesus, which is your sure refuge from them that afflict you ; which never

rejects the cry of the distressed,—and never grows weary of relieving you on account of the continuance of your wants ; but is always open to receive your cry, and ready to impart consolation.

During the time that our blessed Lord lived amongst men, he gave the most evident proofs that he compassionated their miseries, and was always ready to afford relief, if only they would accept it. His commiserating Heart melted into tenderness at the sight of a poor afflicted widow, who was weeping over the death of her only Son ; and he even wrought a miracle to comfort her : it sighed, it heaved with grief, when the two sisters were shedding tears of sorrow for the death of their brother Lazarus ; and he hastened to remove the cause of their tears by restoring Lazarus to life : it sought not the great ones of this world—not those whom the smiles of prosperity and earthly honours rendered delusively happy ; but, such was the general feeling which the tenderness of his heart had diffused among the people, that the sick and the afflicted flocked to him from all sides ; so that, wherever he went, he was generally surrounded by those who were in some kind of distress ; and a “virtue went out from him (from his commiserating heart) and healed all.” (*Lk.* vi. 19.) And does that tender and commiserating ~~Heart~~ Heart compassionate our miseries less now, when reigning in heaven, or does ~~it~~ burn with a less ardent desire to relieve us, than when living on earth ? Does ~~it~~ not still address to us its pressing invitation : “Come to me, all you that labour and

are burdened, and I will refresh you" ? (*Mt. xi. 28.*)

Go then, my Brethren, to that mercy-seat of your God ! to that storehouse of his gifts ! go with an entire confidence, and there lay open your troubles, and all your wants. O my Jesus ! my Lord and my God ! (you will say,) behold the troubles that oppress me ! either deliver me from them, or enable me to bear this cross patiently, for thy greater glory and my own salvation. Thou seest my extreme poverty—all the wants of my soul ; from the rich treasures of thy bountiful Heart, relieve these my necessities ; oh ! "help me for thy mercies' sake !" Persevere in your prayer with a firm loving confidence, and you will be consoled and relieved : no one can carry his troubles or his wants ~~into the~~ ~~Heart of~~ Jesus, without being *spiritually* better, and richer, and happier. And if you "labour and are burdened"—if you labour under the tyranny or violence of your passions, or are even burdened with a heavy load of past sins ; lament these evils, with a desire to serve God faithfully ; resolve to break the chains of your slavery, to renounce the occasions of sin, and to do your duty in future ; strive earnestly to do so ; and fly with confidence to the merciful and bountiful ~~Heart of~~ Jesus for pardon and assistance ; and you will obtain both. He invites, he entreats you to do so : "Come to me (he says), all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." Thus he pardoned and assisted Magdalen, and Peter, and the poor publican, and the penitent thief ; and so he pardons and assists others, who, in like

manner, have recourse to him ; and will he not do the same for you, if you also apply to him in a similar manner ?

2. But, my Brethren, we are not properly ~~devout~~ ~~to the Sacred Heart of Jesus~~, unless we *grieve with it*, not only over our own sins and spiritual disorders, but also over the outrages which he daily receives from others.

When we look around us, and behold so many profanations of what is most holy openly committed ; and hear so many impieties and blasphemies uttered against the most sacred Institutions of God's love—against that holy ~~Sacrifice which is offered on our Altars~~, and that life-giving Sacrament which we so frequently receive ;—when we see such multitudes, for whom the loving Heart of Jesus poured forth the last drop of its blood, seduced from their obedience to his Church, and, led on by the Spirit of error, striving to subvert that holy Religion which he laboured, and suffered, and died to establish ;—when we see so many temples, which were raised by our Catholic Ancestors, and consecrated to him for the celebration of the holy and sublime Mysteries of our Faith, now prostituted to error, and profaned by rites which he has never authorized, and by the preaching of doctrines, which, by the mouth of his Church, he has condemned : when, looking around us, we hear and see all these profanations, impieties, and scandals, what ought to be our feelings, if we really love our Redeemer ? how ought we to lament these outrages against him, and do what we can, by

prayer and such means as may be in our power, to remedy them ; endeavouring at the same time, to make him some amends by our own good conduct ?

When, in the Garden of Gethsemani, our blessed Lord foresaw *these evils*, his divine Heart was so overwhelmed with grief, that, his eyes not being sufficient to weep over so many and so great evils, it poured out its blood through every pore of his body. And shall not *we*, then, lament them, and do what we can to make some reparation ?

When Almighty God was about to strike Jerusalem in punishment of its profanations and other crimes, he enabled his Prophet Ezechiel to see the six Angels, who were to be the ministers of his vengeance. And the Prophet heard the Almighty say to one of these Angels : “Go through the midst of the city, and mark THAU upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and mourn for all the abominations that are committed in the midst thereof.” But to the other five Angels, who had weapons of destruction in their hands, the Prophet heard the Almighty say : “Go ye after him (that is, after the Angel who was ordered to put the mark) : Go ye after him through the city, and strike : let not your eye spare, nor be ye moved to pity : utterly destroy old and young : but upon whomsoever you shall see, THAU, kill him not. And they went forth, and slew them that were in the city.” (*Ezech. ix.*) Now, from all this, it is evident, that to “sigh and mourn” over the impieties, the profanations and other public evils, that are committed against God, is the duty

of those that love him ; it is a kind of zeal for his honour, which is very pleasing to him, and which preserves those who exercise it from being involved in the public scourge, when God chastises the guilty country.

~~Let us, then, be devout to the Sacred Heart of~~
~~Jesus, and~~ let our devotion lead us to commiserate with that loving Heart, by lamenting the evils we see and hear around us—the profanations, which, for three centuries, have been desecrating our Country ; and let us do all we can to repair them, by praying for the conversion of those who are deluded by the spirit of error.

But more especially, let us lament the evils which we have ourselves committed ; and by our amendment and works of penance, make reparation to the ~~Sacred Heart~~ of Jesus, for the ingratitude where-with we have hitherto repaid its love for us.

SERMON XXXIV.

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE HELPS GOD GIVES US TO BE SAVED.

“Master, we have laboured all the night, and have taken nothing; but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes.” (Luke v. 5, 6.)

From the previous failure, and subsequent success of the Apostles, as related in this day's Gospel, I intend to take occasion to address you on the *means of salvation*, or *helps to be saved*, which God has provided for us in his Church. Unless he helps us, we can do nothing towards our salvation: we may labour, but it will be in vain—we shall gain nothing thereby; for “Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” (*Ps. cxxvi. 1.*) But with his help, we can do all that he requires from us: we can succeed in saving our soul; because “his grace is sufficient for us.” (*2 Cor. xii. 9.*)

But before I enter upon this subject, I will quote to you a passage from the Thirty-third Chapter of the Prophecy of Ezechiel, and make some few reflec-

tions upon it, with reference to the lamentable conduct of many Christians, who habitually neglect the means of salvation provided for them. In that passage the Almighty thus addresses his Prophet :—

“O Son of man, I have made thee a watch-man to the house of Israel; therefore, thou shalt hear the word from my mouth, and shalt tell it them from me. When I say to the wicked: O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked man from his way: that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but I will require his blood at thy hand. But, if thou tell the wicked man, that he may be converted from his ways; and he be not converted from his ways: he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Thou therefore, O Son of man, say to the house of Israel: Thus have you spoken, saying: our iniquities and our sins are upon us; and we pine away in them: how then can we live?—Say to them: As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; and why will you die, O house of Israel?” (*Ezech.* xxxiii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.)

When I consider the awful responsibility of a Pastor—that he will have to answer to Almighty God for the souls of those who are committed to his care,—that if any are lost, through his neglecting to admonish them of their duties, God declares he will require those souls at his hands; this consideration is enough, under any circumstances, to make

me tremble. If, however, I observed you diligent and regular in the performance of your Christian duties,—showing yourselves fervent and zealous in the service of God,—and attending to the salvation of your soul *more* anxiously, than to any other affair ; this would greatly relieve my apprehensions ; although there would still remain, even then, a very heavy responsibility. But, what am I to think, when, instead of this, I observe amongst you a very different conduct ? Yes, when I observe some of you showing a want of zeal in God's service, by absenting yourselves from ~~Mass~~, or from the other public Services of the Church, on Sundays, and Holidays of ~~Obligation~~, without any reason, or at least without any sufficient reason ; as if you were under *no obligation* of keeping those days holy ;—when I observe you very slack in approaching the Sacraments ; and some of you even staying away from them altogether, thus living in an habitual neglect of their duty, and besides this neglect, giving disedification also to others by a wild and wicked course of life : when I observe all this ; and *then* consider the awful passage, which I have just quoted to you, what am I to think ? what a subject of sad reflections—of gloomy forebodings !

But, my Brethren, that your souls may not be required at my hands—that I may at least deliver my *own* soul, I admonish you (or, at least, *those* among you who are living in an habitual neglect of their Christian duties.)—I admonish you of the causes and fatal consequences of such negligence.

POINT I.
Causes and
consequences
of neglecting
the means of
salvation.

From what, my Brethren, does such indifference, such neglect of salvation proceed? It cannot be because you find happiness in leading a negligent and sinful course of life; for such a life brings with it misery upon misery. From what then? Why, it proceeds, in a great measure, from the delusions of the enemy of your salvation, who endeavours to make you neglect the service of God, by representing to you the affair of salvation as being exceedingly difficult, and by taking from you almost all hope of succeeding. And when, by these delusions and other temptations, he has led you into sin; he *then* tries to prevent you from returning to God, by representing to you the difficulty of true repentance—the many strong temptations to which you will be continually exposed, and the difficulty of overcoming them,—and so he endeavours to persuade you, that your salvation is almost hopeless.

But, my Brethren, in repentance, and in the amendment of your life, is there anything so very discouraging? is the work of salvation so very difficult, as the enemy would represent it? Most confidently do I answer, that to work out your salvation *is not so difficult*, as it is generally imagined to be.

The Gospel of this day contains a very useful and encouraging instruction on this point. Without God's aid, we can do nothing more than *labour in*

vain ; but, with his assistance, how easy to succeed ? “ Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it ” (*Ps. cxxvi. 1*) ; but his grace is sufficient for us (*2 Cor. xii. 9*), and he promises this sufficient grace to all those who will employ the proper means of obtaining it.

Salvation has indeed its difficulties ; yet it is not so difficult as the enemy would represent ; and its difficulties need not discourage you, because we have *so many and such efficacious means*—we have more abundant means, and more powerful helps for succeeding in this, than in any other affair. Every thing in the world : the goods and evils of life,—crosses and afflictions,—prosperity and adversity,—riches and poverty,—health and sickness,—the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh—all serve, or we may make them serve, to promote our salvation : this is the use we can and should make of them : “ To them that love God, *all things* work together unto good ; to such as, according to his purpose, are called to be Saints.” (*Rom. viii. 29.*)

The GRACE of God is, indeed, *necessary* for us ; but we *may* have his grace, if we choose ; it is promised on certain conditions, and those conditions are very easy, namely, that we *employ the means of grace* provided for us by the divine Goodness.

POINT II.

The first of these means is
The Means : *Prayer* ; and it is a necessary
 1st. *Prayer.* means, for we cannot be saved
 without it : “ You have not, be-

cause you ask not." (*James* iv. 2.) But are you not inexcusable, if you neglect a means so easy, so certain? God has promised to give to those who ask: "He shall cry to me, and I will hear him." (*Psa.* xc. 15.)—"Call upon me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver thee." (*Psa.* xlix. 15.)—"As they are yet speaking, I will hear." (*Isa.* lxxv. 24.)—"Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do...and if you shall ask *me* anything in my name, that I will do" (*John* xiv. 13, 14): "Ask and you shall receive." (*John* xvi. 24.) For, "you shall ask *whatsoever you will*, and it shall be done unto you." (*John* xv. 7.)

POINT III.

2ndly. The
Sacraments.

You see, then, from these positive and repeated promises, how efficacious Prayer must be as a means of grace; but the *Sacraments*, which Christ has instituted in his Church, are still more so. We cannot receive any of the Sacraments, without receiving thereby *Sanctifying Grace*, unless we ourselves put some obstacle in the way. Therefore, whenever we receive a Sacrament, the grace of that Sacrament is sure to be received, if only we have duly prepared ourselves for receiving it.

Thus *Baptism* cleanses us from sin, and adorns us with sanctifying grace;—*Confirmation* gives us strength to withstand all opposition in the practice of Religion, by communicating to us the Holy Ghost, with his sevenfold gifts and graces;—The

Holy Communion is an efficacious remedy for all our weaknesses ; it enables us to live up to our duty, to adorn our souls with virtue, and to become perfect ; because therein we receive, not only grace, but the *Author* of grace himself—we partake of the “bread of life, of which whosoever eateth, he shall live for ever” (*John* vi. 48, 52) ;—If we unhappily fall into mortal sin, we can obtain in the Sacrament of *Penance* the pardon of our guilt, with grace to enable us to avoid future relapses ;—We have the Sacrament of *Extreme-Union* to assist us in our departure out of this life ;—And the Sacrament of *Matrimony* to sanctify the married state.

POINT IV.

3rdly. The Sacrifice of the Mass.

And besides Prayer and the Sacraments, what an abundant source of graces, what powerful helps are provided for us in the Sacrifice of the Mass ! By assisting at it, we are enabled to pay to the Almighty our homage of *Adoration*, and *Thanksgiving*, in a manner that is pleasing and acceptable to him ; we are enabled also to *satisfy* his justice for our sins, by offering him the infinite satisfaction made by Christ ; and we can *obtain*, by means of this Sacrifice, all the graces we stand in need of.

POINT V.

4thly. The Merits of Christ.

All the graces and helps that we can have, come to us through the *Merits of Christ*. His merits are abundantly sufficient for all the wants of all mankind ; because they

are *infinite* : and the whole treasure of them is made over to *us* ; so that, we may obtain a plentiful application of them to our souls, if we please ; for, they are applied to us by *Prayer*, by the *Sacraments*, and by the ~~*Sacrifice of the Mass*~~.

How abundantly sufficient are all these means which the Divine Goodness has provided for us ! If it had been left to us to choose for ourselves the means of salvation, could we have chosen means more powerful, and, at the same time, more easy ?

And *what use* have you hitherto made of them ? Do you not live in the frequent neglect of them ? The neglect of these means is what makes salvation difficult : for salvation is difficult, very difficult, and even *impossible*, to those who will not use the *necessary means*. Such neglect is sure to lead to the depth of *sin* and *misery* here during life ; and to prepare you for endless miseries hereafter, in the flames of hell.

And *will* you, my Brethren, plunge yourselves into eternal misery, when you have such powerful and such easy means of escaping it ? Oh ! consider what that eternity of misery is : It is to suffer *all* possible torments !—all that you are *capable* of suffering !—all *at once* !—in the *greatest* degree of *severity* !—at *every instant* !—and without *end*, or abatement ! Oh ! what a misery ! Oh ! what a terrible thing it is to fall thus into the hands of the living God in the next life, after having neglected to serve him in this !

It is only to such as are guilty of this neglect

that these terrors need be alarming. Humble yourselves, therefore, before God, by acknowledging that you can do nothing of yourselves ; cast yourselves entirely upon his mercy, imploring his grace, and employing the necessary means of obtaining it ; and then you will have nothing to fear.

Be not discouraged at the sight of difficulties, since you have such easy, and efficacious means of surmounting them. If the thought or fear of difficulties should depress or discourage you, call to mind these means which you have in your own power ; and also the encouraging words of Christ, who says : " Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you ; and you shall find rest to your souls : for my yoke is sweet, and my burden light." (*Mt. xi. 28.*) Raise your eyes up towards heaven, and consider the rewards that await you there. The God whom you have to serve assures you, that, if you will but be faithful to him for a short time, " Your reward is very great in heaven." (*Mt. v. 12.*)

SERMON XXXV.

The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE GREAT EVIL OF MORTAL SIN.

"The countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil things." (1 Pet. iii. 12.)

Yes, my Brethren, "the countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil things," as the history of Mankind in every age demonstrates. For, sin is the *cause of all the miseries* that have ever been experienced in this world, and that will be felt for all eternity in the next.

POINT I. How sin has already been punished.	Sin began its first ravages in heaven; and after having driven from that blissful abode millions of angelic spirits, it commenced its dreadful havoc here upon earth.
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And here we behold it stripping our first parents of original justice,—banishing them out of paradise,—and bringing upon them and us miseries of every kind—wars, plagues, famine, sickness, and death. (*Gen. iii.*) We behold it throwing open the vast cataracts of heaven,—breaking up the fountains of the deep abyss,—and in one universal deluge,

sweeping off every sinner from the face of the earth. (*Gen. vii.*) We behold it calling down fire from above upon Sodom and Gomorrha, with the neighbouring cities, and destroying their impious inhabitants. (*Gen. xix.*) We behold it causing the earth to open beneath the feet of Core, Dathan, and Abiron, and to swallow them down alive into hell. (*Numb. xvi.*) We find it devoting to destruction three and twenty thousand of the children of Israel on one occasion (*Exod. xxxii.*), and four and twenty thousand on another (*Numb. xxv.*), to be slain by the command of their offended God.

And how many other severe afflictions, and temporal chastisements were suffered by that chosen people, all on account of sin? For, what but sin excluded Moses, together with six hundred thousand of the people, from entering into the land of promise? What but sin so frequently afterwards led the Jews into captivity; and, on one occasion, kept them captives during seventy years? And (which is still worse) what but sin brought them to be rejected by Almighty God in the end; so that St. Paul was inspired to say of them: "God hath given them the spirit of insensibility, until this present day"? (*Rom. xi. 8.*)

And besides these external evils of sin, who can sufficiently describe its spiritual calamities? Not to mention that blindness of understanding, that corruption of heart, and proneness to evil, which it first produced; do we not find it excluding from the kingdom of heaven *all mankind*, without exception,

during the long period of four thousand years? And as the Scripture declares (*Mt. xx. 16*), that, though "many are called," yet "but few are chosen;" and as sin is the cause why so few are chosen; who can calculate its direful consequences, till the great day of General Judgment shall reveal those consequences to us? consequences which will be felt by millions of millions of our poor fellow-creatures for all eternity!

POINT II. The *Evil* of sin, then, being so
 The great very alarming, and its malice so
 prevalence indescribably great, is it not truly
 of sin. afflicting to see it so very common
 amongst mankind—so prevalent in
 every rank of society? For, notwithstanding its
 malice and its punishments, it rages every where;
 like a desolating torrent, inundating all the paths
 of life: it finds its way into every solitude, and fills
 every city and village with its abominations; so
 that with truth may we say, that the empire of sin
 is almost universal!

Here, my Brethren, a very important question suggests itself: What is the cause of this extreme prevalence of vice? It proceeds from *a want of proper thought*. You do not think seriously on the *malice*,—and the *punishments* of ~~mortal~~ sin; and therefore you thoughtlessly commit it: "With desolation (says the Prophet) is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart." (*Jer. xii. 11.*)

I will now, therefore, proceed to lay before you a few reflections, on the *great Evil* of ~~mortal~~ sin, and on its *lamentable Effects*. But to do this more effectually, I must first describe to you the *happy state of a soul, when adorned with sanctifying grace*.

POINT III.

Happy state of the soul, when in Sanctifying Grace.

The soul, when in the state of grace, is beautiful, like an Angel—a pleasing object in the eyes of God. Such a one is raised to the exalted dignity of being the child of God, and heir to his eternal Kingdom; the beloved spouse of Jesus Christ, and living temple of the Holy Ghost: he has God for his special Friend and continual Benefactor; and “If God be for us (says St. Paul), who is against us?” (*Rom. viii. 31.*) And besides all this, the grace of God in the soul is an abundant source of spiritual treasures, because it renders our actions meritorious in the sight of God, and gives us a right and title to the kingdom of heaven.

Such is the happy state of a person, who is living in the grace of God. I have described this, in order that you may see the height of happiness from which you fall, and the depth of misery into which you plunge yourselves, when you consent to ~~mortal~~ sin.

POINT IV.

Wretchedness of being in the state of sin.

For, in that very instant in which you commit such a sin, you lose all the treasures you possessed,—you forfeit the blessings you enjoyed,—and are strip-

of all those noble titles to which you were exalted ;—your soul becomes hideous and deformed,—you lose the friendship of God, and become objects of his wrath,—and heaven *then* frowns down upon you with indignation and horror ;—you are no longer *then* the happy children of God, and heirs of his kingdom ; but your name is struck out from the book of life,—you are degraded and disinherited by your heavenly Father : for, so far from being *then* the children of God, you become the slaves of the devil, and children of everlasting perdition.

And what becomes now of that living Temple, wherein the Holy Ghost delighted to dwell ? What becomes of all those precious ornaments—those inestimable treasures of virtue and good works, that adorned and enriched it ? Alas ! they are all gone ! for, as soon as grace is banished from the soul, and sin enters in its place, nothing remains there *then*, but a frightful scene of desolation and horror !

Such, my Brethren, are the dismal consequences of mortal sin—such is the abomination of desolation which it brings with it into the Temple of the living God ! Yes, this is the deplorable change, which sin produces in the *soul of him* who commits it :—He becomes dead in the eyes of God, because he is stripped of sanctifying grace, which gave life and vigour to his soul ;—the foundation of his happiness is destroyed ;—and all his good works are rendered of no avail. Yes, though he had served God *faithfully*, even for seventy years, ~~like St. Hila-~~

~~man~~,—though he had distributed all his goods to feed the poor,—though he had spent his days in prayer, and fasting, and had laid up an abundant store of good works for the next life; yet, one ~~mortal~~ sin destroys at once all his merits, and renders him liable to eternal condemnation: “All his justices, which he hath done, shall not be remembered.” (*Ezech. xviii. 24.*)

POINT V. Oh! how deplorable therefore
 How sinners is your condition, when in a state
 are eternally of ~~mortal~~ sin! You have *then*
 punished. lost your God, your Sovereign
 Good; and, if you die in this
 state, you have lost him for ever! and besides this
 eternal loss of your God, you have rendered your-
 selves liable to endless torments in the flames of hell!

And now, my Brethren, go down, in imagination, into that place of torments, in order to form a more correct notion of the deplorable state of a soul that departs this life in mortal sin, and of the *enormity* of sin which reduces it to that deplorable state. And, indeed, frequently and seriously to reflect upon the punishments of sin in the next life, is both a prudent and a profitable practice.

Go down, then, I again exhort you—go down in imagination, into that place of torments, and take a view of the frightful scene that will there present itself to your consideration. Alas! what do you there behold? what a scene of horror and distress? “a land that is dark, and covered with the mist of

death ; a land of misery and darkness, where no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth" (*Job* x. 21, 22)—"a pool of fire and brimstone, where day and night the poor sufferers have no rest ; but the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever." (*Apoc.* xiv. 11 ; xxi. 8.)

There, ~~surrounded by scorpions ; and~~ continually tormented by the sting of remorse, which is even more excruciating than the scorpion's bite ; they eternally agonize and burn !

There, in bitterness of soul, they are made to drink the gall of dragons, and the wine of God's indignation ; being *immortal* ONLY that their sufferings may continue for ever !

As for peace, or pleasure, or comfort, alas ! they have none ! Every comfort,—even the least glimpse of comfort is *lost to them*—is lost to them *for ever* ! Lost to them are all the endearing ties of relationship and love ; lost to them are the soothing names of parent, child, and friend ; lost is even *hope* itself, that last consolation of the wretched and forlorn ! *

There, bursting forth into tears of bitterest grief, and groaning in agonies of the deepest despair, they continually bewail their sad lot :—" Ah ! (does each poor sufferer say to himself)—ah ! miserable, ill-fated wretch that I am ! here I am, tormented in these flames ! Farewell to peace, to happiness, and comfort !—*misery—misery* is my everlasting portion ! No more to be clothed in purple and fine linen ; no more to indulge in the sumptuous feast : but, *here I am*,—clothed in devouring flames,—and

forced to drink eternally of this bitter cup of the divine vengeance ! Oh ! what a terrible thing it is for me to have thus fallen into the hands of the living God ! ”

This, my Brethren, is but a very faint description of the torments of sinners in the next life : yet, faint as it is, it is enough to show, that, if a God of infinite mercy punishes sin *so severely*, its malice must be great in the extreme ; especially when we consider who those unhappy beings are, upon whom the God of all goodness thus exercises his vengeance.

They are beings, whom he created in order to make them happy with himself for ever in the kingdom of his glory ; and upon whom he had bestowed, for this purpose, many and great favours. They are beings, to promote whose salvation he did not think it too much even to deliver up his only-begotten Son to the most cruel torments of the Cross. They were once the children of his love, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ ; they were the heirs of his eternal kingdom, and co-heirs with Christ.

Not even the tie of affection, that binds the fondest Mother to her favourite child, is half so strong, as that which once bound those ungrateful souls to their God ! What conclusion, then, can be more evident than this : that, since a God of *infinite goodness and mercy* torments his once *favourite creatures* with such *extreme severity*, for *all eternity*, the EVIL, which provokes him to do so, must be INCONCEIVABLY GREAT ? Oh ! with what reason,

then, may we exclaim with St. Peter, that "the countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil things!"

Seeing now the dreadful evil of ~~mortal~~ sin, most earnestly do I exhort you to enter seriously into yourselves,—to shed tears of sincere sorrow over your past sins,—and to take such effectual measures for the future, as will secure you from ever falling into them again. Excite, my Brethren, and cherish in your soul such a horror of this greatest of evils, as will make you always ready to suffer *any torments*, rather than ever consent to commit another ~~mortal~~ sin.

SERMON XXXVI.

The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE AFFAIR OF SALVATION.

“So do you also reckon, that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God.” (Rom. vi. 11.)

These words of St. Paul express the important end for which we live: for we were created and placed here, in order that, avoiding sin, we might live for God, by loving and serving him while we are here, and that hereafter we may love and possess and enjoy him for all eternity.

It was the importance of this fundamental truth of Religion, that made St. Ignatius commence his Spiritual Exercises by saying: “Man was created

for this end, that he might praise and reverence the Lord his God, and, serving him, at length be saved." This is a truth universally admitted by mankind : for where can any one be found so wicked and depraved—so destitute of all sense of Religion, as not to acknowledge, that, to save his soul is an affair of the greatest importance ?

POINT I. Our salvation is our whole business.	The importance of saving our soul is evident from this : that to save our soul is the <i>whole</i> business of man in this world—the very business for which we live.
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Would that *you*, my Brethren, had as deep a conviction of the importance of this truth as St. Bernard had, when, renouncing the world, he retired to a monastery, with the intention and fixed determination of using all his endeavours to secure, at any cost, the salvation of his soul. In order to keep up this good resolution, and to excite him every day to greater fervour, that illustrious Saint was in the habit of frequently asking himself this question : "Bernard, Bernard, why camest thou hither ?"

And *you*, my Brethren ; why came you into this world ? Was it to indulge in pleasures, to enjoy amusements, or to heap up riches that you may live independent for a few years ? Was it to lead a life of sin, by gratifying your passions during the short time that is allowed you here ; and then to be called out of life, and consigned to a miserable eternity ?

Was this the end for which you came hither? Was it not rather, that, dying to sin, you might live for God, by loving and serving him during life, and might thereby come to love and enjoy him for ever in the kingdom of his glory? For, as the Book of Ecclesiastes says (xii. 13): "This is all man."

POINT II. To save our soul is our own
Salvation personal affair—it is a business which
is our own no other person can do for us; but
business. we must do it ourselves. A farmer
 can send servants to cultivate his
 fields; a king can have generals to manage his wars; a prisoner can employ a counsellor to plead his cause; but salvation is a cause which our *own works* only can plead,—a war which we ourselves must manage,—a field which our own hands must cultivate; for, as St. Augustine says: "He who created us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves."

In earthly pursuits, we frequently labour for others: another may reap what you have sown; he may gather the fruits of the tree, which you have planted; he may inhabit the house, which you have built; and may enjoy the property, which you have acquired. It is not so in the affair of your salvation—the gain, or loss, is all your own. If you work out your salvation, then "you will receive a hundred-fold in the time that now is, and life everlasting hereafter" (*Mk. x. 30*): this is your gain.

But if you neglect the love and service of God,

and thereby lose your soul ; it will then be your bitter portion, to lead a life of misery here, and to suffer an eternity of still greater misery hereafter : this is your loss.

POINT III. And this loss is irreparable. St. John Chrysostom, reasoning on this subject, says : " If you should lose one of your eyes, you have another left by which you can still see the objects around you ; but you have only one soul, and yet you are not afraid of losing it ; although you know, that, when once you have lost your soul, you have lost your *all*, and you have lost it for *ever*.

We read in the Book of Genesis (xix), that the Almighty, wearied with the crimes of Sodom, resolved to punish its wicked inhabitants ;—but, not wishing to confound the innocent with the guilty, he admonished Lot to provide for his own safety. The Angel said to him : " Hast thou here any of thy kindred, son-in-law, or sons, or daughters ? bring them out of this city." But when Lot warned his kindred of the threatened destruction, they looked upon his admonition with contempt, and treated it with neglect. " Save thyself, (the Angel then said to him,) or thou wilt perish with the rest." And they conducted Lot out of the city, when fire from heaven immediately destroyed it, together with its inhabitants.

The Pastors of the Church, like the heavenly messengers sent to Lot, warn *you*, they urge and

conjure you to think of the salvation of your soul—to provide for your own safety, by labouring to secure your salvation. But alas ! with what success ? On whatever side we look, we see men active, industrious, ardent in every other pursuit ; but, for the interests of their soul—for the only affair of real importance, they show themselves cold and indifferent : “ With desolation is all the land made desolate ; because there is none that considereth in the heart.” (*Jer. xii. 11.*)

If we go into places of public resort, we see crowds of people all busied in their various pursuits ; care, and anxiety, and earnestness appear in their countenances ; some are taken up with one pursuit, some with another ; but scarcely shall we find one paying the least attention to the care of his soul—to the important business of eternity ; which, after all, deserves our first and principal care. “ O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart ? why will you be in love with vanity, and seek after mere delusions ? ” (*Ps. iv. 3.*)

“ O Christians ! exclaims St. Augustine ; if you wish to understand the importance of salvation, and the real value of your soul, come with me to Calvary : Behold your God agonizing in the Garden,—scourged at the pillar,—crowned with thorns,—nailed to the Cross,—torn and mangled with wounds,—and dying the most excruciating death ! And why did he receive all these wounds ? why did he die this agonizing death ? All this, our dying Saviour seems to say to us from the Cross—all this was to pur-

chase your redemption—to save your soul ! God so loved the world, as to give his only Son to redeem it.” (*John* iii. 16, 17.)

Cornelius a Lapide* gives a very striking example on this subject : A certain man, who, by his labours and industry, had laid up an immense property, finding himself near his end, called his children to his bedside, and said to them : “ My dear beloved children, assist me now in this hour of need—in this fearful moment ! I have laboured for *you* (he said) day and night ; and this is the first time I have ever needed or asked your assistance.” “ Ah my dear Father, (they all at once answered, bathed in tears,) what can *we* do for you, in this distressing state to which you are now reduced ? what help can *we* afford you against the agonies of death, which have already commenced ? ” — “ Death ! (exclaimed the dying Father ;) must I then *die*, before I have begun to enjoy the fruit of my anxious labours ? Oh ! the vanity, oh ! the folly of all my pursuits ! For *you* I have *laboured* without ceasing ; for *you* I have spent my life, and even *lost my soul* ; and now you reward me by saying : ‘ We can afford you no help ! ’ Oh ! that I had been more wise ! oh ! that I had laboured less for *you*, and more for *myself*—less for this world, and more for eternity, which, alas ! I have entirely neglected ; and now, being wholly unprepared, I die in despair ! Oh ! had I but my health again, how differently would I live ! ” Then uttering a few more words of despair, he expired !

* A. Lapide is a Jesuit

Thus does death open our eyes ; thus does it change our sentiments and feelings, as to this world and its pursuits. Then do we see clearly the importance of labouring to secure our salvation.

May God, in his goodness, open *your* eyes now, before it be too late ; may he incline your hearts to a firm and determined resolution, that henceforth you will labour to save your soul, cost what it may ; and may he give you the grace to put your resolution in practice, and to persevere in the practice of it to the end of your lives.

SERMON XXXVII.

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost.

ON NEGLECTING SALVATION.

“What fruit had you then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death. But now being made free from sin and becoming servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting.” (Rom. vi. 21, 22.)

My Brethren, after all the pleasures and indulgences which you may have sought, in the satisfaction of any criminal desire; after all your solicitude for earthly things, and your restless labours in the pursuit of them; what fruit have you from these things, but only an uneasy and troubled conscience?

And if you give your heart to these pursuits, against which Religion warns you—if you go on labouring only for what is either carnal or earthly—if, for the sake of pleasures and enjoyments, or earthly gains, you neglect the care of your salvation; what fruit will you have in these things, when your last hour shall arrive, but only anguish of soul, and perhaps even despair: for you will *then* see,

that "the end of them is death." "*O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? why will you be in love with vanity, and seek after mere delusions?*" (Ps. iv. 3.)

POINT I. Created, as you are, for eternal happiness; and knowing that you are placed in this world for no other end, than that, by serving God faithfully, you may be one day put in possession of that eternal happiness; knowing also that, if, by neglecting your salvation, you arrive not at this great end, you will be condemned to endless misery in the flames of hell: knowing, as you do, all this, I ask you: Can there be a greater folly—a more complete blindness, than, for the sake of the perishable things of this life, to run the certain risk of losing, for ever, the eternal glory prepared for you in heaven; and of plunging yourselves, moreover, into all the horrors of the second death?

You know you have heaven to gain,—you know you are daily and *hourly* in danger of losing it,—and you know, that, if you do lose it, its loss will be attended with never-ending woe: now in this dreadful alternative wherein you are placed, between the extreme of happiness, and the extreme of misery, *can* you, unless you are completely indifferent to your everlasting welfare—can you esteem any efforts too great to escape the one by gaining the other? Had you only heaven to *gain*, without having to

fear the dreadful consequences resulting from *its loss*, would it not be the height of folly and madness to refuse a whole life of vigorous penance, to purchase so great a good? What, then, must it be, when you reflect, that, by losing Heaven, besides the loss of supreme happiness, you do effectually consign your soul to endless torments in that pool of fire where day and night you will have no rest! (*Apoc.* xiv. 11; xxi. 8.) Oh! this reflection should make each one apply himself with the utmost care and diligence to the important business of his salvation.

POINT II.

Our salvation
requires all our
care.

For this is a business which
requires much labour and con-
tinual care. For, those servants
only, who have made a diligent
use of the talents committed to

their care, will be invited to enter into the joy of their Lord; whilst the slothful servant shall be bound hand and foot, and cast into the exterior darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (*Mt.* xxv. 12, 23, 30.) Therefore, my Brethren, be resolved, from this moment, to use your utmost diligence in labouring to secure your salvation. Remember, it is "not every one who merely saith, Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (*Mt.* vii. 21);—it is not every one who merely *seeks* to enter in at the narrow gate, that does really effect his purpose; but it is *he only who strives*—who uses his utmost endeavours to enter; for "Many (says our Lord) shall *seek* to

enter, and shall not be able." (*Lk. xiii. 24.*) Oh, this reflection ought to excite in every one of us the most lively apprehensions, lest, for want of sufficient diligence—for want of duly corresponding with the graces of heaven, we should neglect our salvation; and thereby close against ourselves for ever the gate of heaven, and be forced to pass through *that* which leads to everlasting misery!

Oh! reflect, my Brethren: how many of our poor fellow-creatures are *now*, at this very moment, suffering all the horrors of despair in the flames of hell, for having neglected *that* which *we* have it *now* in our power to do! And faith teaches, *that*, if *we* neglect it, as they did, we also shall be doomed to suffer, for all eternity, the like horrors which such neglect has brought upon them! Oh! can we have a more powerful motive to urge us to set about the business of our salvation without delay; and to persevere therein, without intermission, to the end of our lives?

POINT III.
Our salvation
requires all our
solicitude.

Oh! if we really took to heart the salvation of our souls, and were thoroughly *in earnest* in this IMPORTANT affair, such reflections as these would never present themselves to us, without making a deep impression on our mind, and leaving behind them a salutary fear, lest we should one day fall victims to those heavy judgments, which are to be eternally exercised upon those who neglect to work out their salvation! And let it not be said, that fears are unnecessary—

uncalled for : for, if we cast our eyes upon the illustrious servants of God, who have gone before us, we shall find the greatest Saints trembling, even at the *bare thought* of these awful truths, upon which, nevertheless, they loved frequently to meditate.

We have often heard of the tears of St. Jerom—of the sighs and groans with which he daily made the desert resound at the thought of the danger of failing in the salvation of his soul. It is said of him that he scarcely passed a single day, without sighs and tears on this subject.

St. Bernard says : “I am seized all over with horror—with fear and trembling, whenever I repeat within myself this sentence of Holy Scripture : ‘Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred.’” (*Eccles. ix. 1.*)

St. Ephrem, discoursing on the second coming of Christ, and on the terrible judgments which will be *then* executed upon those who have lost their soul, and fearing for his own safety, exclaims : “At this thought I am ready to swoon away ; my limbs quake for fear, my eyes swim in tears, my tongue falters, and my thoughts are rapt up in silence : all *you* who have tears, sigh with me ; and you who *have them not*, listen now to what will befall you : and let us not neglect our salvation.”

And St. Augustine, meditating on the miserable end of all those, who, not being of the number of the Elect, are lost for ever ; and filled with most lively apprehensions for his own salvation, thus addresses his God : “These thy judgments, O Lord, are great

and terrible ; and when I meditate upon them, all my bones are made to tremble ; because no man, living upon the earth, liveth in a state of security ! ”

Such were the feelings which the frequent reflection, and even the bare thought of these awful truths, excited in these great Saints. And if they, my Brethren—if these pillars of the Church of Christ have been moved with such lively apprehensions for their own salvation, when meditating on the danger of not succeeding in this important affair ; can *you*, my Brethren, view the same danger with indifference—without entering into similar sentiments ?

POINT IV.
Indifference of
the generality
of mankind.

But, alas ! instead of entering into the feelings of the Saints who have gone before us, how insensible are men generally to this awful truth ! seldom or never

do they reflect upon it ; and when they do, it is in general so very superficially, that it makes no impression upon them ! Look, for example, at the Merchant, the Farmer, the Tradesman, the Labourer—see how busily all are engaged, from morning till night, in their respective *worldly* pursuits. To these pursuits they give their whole care and attention—to these they apply with indefatigable labour and unwearied perseverance ; they allow no opportunity of gain to pass by, without endeavouring to profit by it ; and are ever ready to forego their ease and enjoyments, whenever their indulging

in these would prove an obstacle to the success of their pursuits.

And while they are thus intent upon the affairs of this world—so bent on pursuing the false—the momentary goods of time, scarcely will they take the least pains to secure to themselves the real and inestimable goods of eternity ! They seem to consider their earthly prosperity, as their only affair of importance—as the very summit of their happiness : And, though daily experience proves, that they are pursuing a mere phantom—an imaginary good ; yet they abate not the ardour of their pursuit ! “ *O ye sons of men !* how long will you be dull of heart ? why will you be in love with vanity ? and seek after mere delusions ? ” Oh ! my Brethren, if you were but half as earnest—did you use but half the care and diligence in securing the salvation of your soul, as worldlings do to insure success to their temporal pursuits ; *then* might you, with joy and confidence, raise your eyes and hearts towards heaven, and sigh for the happy day which would infallibly put you in possession of its sovereign delights !

Is it not strange—most strange, that the *affair of eternity*, which, of *all* the affairs we have on our hands, is by far the most important ; or, rather, is the *only one* of *real importance*, should, nevertheless, be the very one, which men thus neglect the most ; and neglect it too with so great indifference ?

How many Christians are ever ready to run the risk of losing their soul eternally, rather than disoblige a friend ? or leave a less fortune to their

children? or lose an opportunity of distinguishing themselves in the world? or of gaining what are called comfortable circumstances? Alas! how differently will such persons think of these things, when they come to die! Will the remembrance of past honours, or of their earthly gains, be sufficient to console them *then* for the *loss of their soul*? Will those friends, whom they are now so afraid of dis-obliging, be able to recompense them *then* for having lost their soul to please them? When you feel yourselves burning in hell (if you should be so unhappy as to go thither), will it be a sufficient consolation to you to reflect, that you have left your children in comfortable circumstances in the world; when it has *cost you your salvation* to procure for them those comfortable circumstances? Is it not the greatest act of folly that a man can possibly be guilty of, thus to neglect his *own salvation*, and condemn himself to *endless misery*, for the sake of procuring merely the *temporal advantage of others*, however near or dear they may be to him? Remember, your salvation is your first and most important business,—that, of all affairs, there is none that concerns you so much, as your salvation,—that this is what our blessed Lord calls “the one thing necessary.” (*Lk. x. 42.*)

But little will it avail you, when you come to die, to have been skilful in the various affairs you have taken in hand: to have been good farmers, clever tradesmen, or skilful mechanics; unless you have referred these things to your salvation. If, for

the sake of these pursuits, you have neglected your salvation, and lost that happiness to the gaining of which they ought principally to have been directed ; what comfort—what consolation can *they* afford, to compensate for the loss ? For, when you have lost your soul, will you be able to comfort yourselves with the reflection, that you have been successful in all your other affairs—affairs, which are of so very *trifling* consequence, when compared with this ? Though you should spend your days in obscurity, forsaken and despised by the world ; without friends or support ; though you should live in poverty, and die in poverty ; still you will be happy, if only you succeed in saving your soul. But, if you fail in this great work, what advantage will it be to you, to have had *even the whole world* at command ? “What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul ?” (*Mt.* xvi. 26.) No, my Brethren, it will be no consolation to you, when you come to die, to have succeeded, even according to your utmost wishes, in every other affair you have taken in hand, if you have failed in *that*, which is the *only* affair of importance—in *that*, which will be *then* your only object of solicitude, and which alone (if you had attended to it) would have made you happy.

With what pleasure will you *then* behold the least thing you have done for your salvation ! but oh ! what a melancholy thing it will then be, to have to look back upon a life, wherein there is more to excite the terrible frowns of the Judge before

whom you are quickly to appear, than to render him propitious to you! Yet alas! how many are there, who have to look back upon such a life—a life wherein they can scarcely discover the least thing, but what is more calculated to fill them with terror, than to give them the least hope or consolation!

May you, my Brethren, adopt a different course; and begin now so to regulate your lives, that *you* may never be brought into these distressing circumstances. Be *faithful*, therefore, and *diligent* in all your religious duties; that “being made free from sin, and becoming servants of God, you may have your fruit unto sanctification; and the end life everlasting.”

Always prefer the interests of your soul before every other consideration;—let the securing of your salvation occupy the *first place* in your heart; and let your chief care and attention be directed to this important object; in all things, “seeking first the kingdom of God and his justice.” (*Mt.* vi. 33.) And *then*, when you shall perceive your last moments drawing near, you may “lift up your heads and rejoice; because your redemption”—your salvation, “is at hand.” (*Lk.* xxi. 28.) Then you may go forth, with confidence, to stand before the judgment-seat of your God; comforted and encouraged with the assured hope, that he is taking you to himself, in order to receive you into the joys of his kingdom, as the reward of your fidelity in his service.

SERMON XXXVIII.

The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

"Give an account of thy stewardship ; for now thou canst be steward no longer." (Luke xvi. 2.)

Religion teaches, that, immediately after death the soul is judged by Jesus Christ, and receives its sentence of reward or punishment ; as we see in the case of Dives and Lazarus. (*Lk. xvi.*) In this judgment, we have three things to consider : The *Persons* to be engaged in it ;—the *Account* to be given ; and the *Sentence* to be passed.

POINT I.	The Persons are : the <i>Judge</i> ,—
The Persons.	the departed <i>Soul</i> ,—and the <i>Witnesses</i> .

1. The *Judge* is JESUS CHRIST, sitting, not on the throne of his mercy, but on the tribunal of his justice ! possessing a clear, accurate, and infallible knowledge of every single circumstance of the

entire life ; knowing the use (good and bad) which has been made of each moment of time ; knowing every action that has been done, every word that has been uttered, every desire and thought that have been entertained ; incapable of being prevented from following the course of strict justice ; sternly adhering to the fixed rule of his Law, and measuring every single moment of our conduct and dispositions by what his Law requires ; not to be moved to mercy by any repentance (then too late) ; allowing no appeal from him to any other tribunal ; to oppose or resist him is utterly impossible, because he is omnipotent ; to evade or escape him, or to hide any of our guilt by excuses, is equally impossible, because he is present every where, and knows all things. How terrible, therefore, is the person of the Judge ! Appease him now, while you can ! render him propitious by sincere repentance, ~~by works of penance,~~ and by a future good life.

2. And who is the person to be judged ? who is to stand this searching trial ? Each individual of the human race, without exception. Every one of us, therefore, must say : " It is I : I myself : no one else can appear for me : I know I shall be summoned before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, (I cannot tell how soon, God only knows ;) there I shall stand trembling with fear and consternation ; weeping in my distress ; imploring my judge, (but all in vain, because too late :) thus shall I stand there solitary and alone ; stripped of all things, except my works, (which perhaps I should be glad

to be stripped of.) In how much greater distress shall I then be than a poor culprit, when he sees his judge put on the black cap for the purpose of pronouncing against him the awful sentence of death!" Oh! how differently shall we judge of this life then! how very differently shall we be affected towards all earthly things! Let us judge of them now, as we shall certainly do then; and by this means, we shall deprive that judgment of its terrors.

3. And who will be the witnesses in that fearful trial? The chief witness will be God himself, who has seen everything with his own eye; so that there can be no possibility whatever of concealing or denying the least thing. The devil will bring forward against the sinner the fatal catalogue of crimes, caused by his delusions and temptations. The Guardian Angel, who was present when each crime was committed, will be obliged to bear testimony to the truth of the same accusations. And conscience (the sinner's own conscience), however unwilling, will be compelled to confirm the same testimony, exclaiming: "It is true." Take care, therefore, that you do not die in sin; and for this purpose, blot out your sins immediately by sincere repentance; avoid them in future, and the occasions that lead to them; live constantly in the state of grace; and then you may expect to die in that happy state.

POINT II.
The account.

And what will be the examination? what account will the poor soul be required to give? Alas!

a most terrible one! exact and minute in every part, and every circumstance! From the first use of reason, to the moment of expiring, every thing, great and small, good and bad, will be closely examined; every action, with its motives, every thought of the mind, every intention, and disposition of the heart: nothing whatever will be overlooked, or omitted; not even one single thought, or "idle word." (*Mt. xii. 36.*) An exact account will be demanded of every one of God's gifts: of health, and of reason, of the powers of body, and the faculties of soul, of possessions, and of time. It will be asked, what use you have made of all these? and also of the occasions and opportunities which you have had of doing good? of the graces you have received? ~~of the Masses you have heard?~~ and of the Sacraments that have been conferred upon you? An account will have to be given of your entire conduct in each state of life, through which you have passed: how you conducted yourself as child, as parent, as servant, as master or mistress, as rich or poor, and as a member of society. The examination will extend, moreover, to the sins caused in others by words, example, or scandal; and to sins not prevented, when they could and should have been prevented; as is frequently the case in parents and other superiors. And the examination of all these things (and of many more) will be most exact and minute, and pursued with the strictest justice: all will be weighed, by the just judgment of God, in the scales of the sanctuary,

according to the doctrines and example of Jesus Christ ; and not merely the works themselves, but the manner also of doing them ; the intention, or disposition of heart, from which they proceeded ; together with their accompanying circumstances. Even our good works will be examined in this rigorous manner ; for God says : “ when I shall take a time, (i. e., at the time of judgment,) I will judge justices ” (*Ps.* lxxiv. 3) ; and, if these will hardly escape without blame, how shall we endure the examination of our iniquities ? Again he says : “ I will search Jerusalem with a lamp ” (*Soph.* i. 12) ; if then the holy city will be so severely examined, what will become of the wicked Babylon ? or, as St. Peter says : “ If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? ” (*1 Pet.* iv. 18.) Alas ! may not each one of us say : How many of my works, which I looked upon as good, will then be found defective ? how many sins, of which I was ignorant, will be then brought against me ? ~~how many, which I thought venial, will be shown to be mortal ?~~ Oh ! what a tremendous account ! what a fearful examination ! how will my poor soul be able to endure it ? but I must endure it : there will be no escape : the just judgment of God will take its course.

POINT III.

And what will the sentence be ?

The sentence.

There are but two described by Jesus Christ in the Gospel : one most sweet and desirable ; the other most severe

and dreadful : "Come, ye blessed of my Father ;"
 "Depart from me, ye cursed." (*Mt.* xxv.) Each of
 us must necessarily receive one or the other of these
 two sentences ; but which will it be ? we know not ;
 God only knows. But this we do know : we shall
 receive that which we choose : the option is given
 to us : "Choose therefore that which pleaseth you,"
 while it is yet in your power to do so. (*Josue* xxiv.
 15.) If you choose the terrible sentence of condem-
 nation ; it is a very easy matter ; nothing can be
 more so : the "broad way" is open before you :
 you have only to follow the multitude—the great
 bulk of mankind, in gratifying yourselves by indulg-
 ing your passions ; you have only to follow your
 own will, and the desires of corrupt nature—to live
 according to your own natural inclinations : the
 sinner only has to pursue his present course ; and
 then he will undoubtedly be paid for his labour in
 the end, by receiving the sentence of eternal
 condemnation.

But if you wish to receive the sweet, the desirable
 sentence of eternal happiness ; you certainly can ;
 although it is not quite so easy ; yet, with the help
 of God's grace, it is not very difficult : our blessed
 Saviour tells us so : "My yoke is sweet, (he says,) and
 my burden light." (*Mt.* xi. 30.) But, how is
 this happy sentence to be obtained ? by what means ?
 In the first place, you must ~~do penance~~ ; not a
 pretended one, but a real **penance** ; such as God
 requires : "Bring forth worthy fruits of penance"
 (*Lk.* iii. 8) ; for, "except you do penance, you shall

all likewise perish." (*Lk.* xiii. 3, 5.) The first means, therefore, is to have recourse, with sincere repentance, to the Sacrament of reconciliation. And in the next place, leaving the example of the multitude, you must "strive to enter in at the narrow gate" (*Lk.* xiii. 24), by living "in holiness and justice" all the remaining days of your life. (*Lk.* i. 75.) For after having laid aside your vices, you have to replace them by habits of virtue ; and therefore, Almighty God commands us, saying : "Avoid evil ; and do good." (*Ps.* xxxvi. 27.) And it is by complying with this divine command, that we shall escape, not indeed this judgment, but the terrors of it.

SERMON XXXIX.

The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON PREPARING FOR DEATH.

"For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side;... because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." (Luke xix. 43, 44.)

How very descriptive are these words of a man, who is surrounded by the perils of death, after having neglected the graces of God—of a man, whom the Almighty has frequently visited by interior calls, inviting him to forsake his sinful life, and to prepare himself for his last end! but "he would not"—he would not know the time of his visitation—the time of mercy, allowed him for repentance and amendment. At length the mercy of God gives place to his justice, by summoning the unhappy sinner out of life. Then does the day

come upon him, when his spiritual enemies cast a trench about him, and compass him round, and straiten him on every side, and bring him to the very brink of despair! Oh! how does he then wish, that, instead of having forsaken his God—his last End, by living in sin; he had led such a life, as would have been a preparation for death! Oh! how glad would he then be, if he had complied with that admonition, which Almighty God gave to the Israelites of old, when he said: "They are a nation without counsel, and without wisdom: O that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end!" (*Deut.* xxxii. 28, 29.)

In the Gospel of St. Luke, there is recorded a very striking and instructive Parable; wherein our blessed Redeemer represents to us two men—one, who, by resigning himself submissively to the orders of Providence, and by making a good use of poverty and afflictions, had prepared himself for death; and the other, who, by employing his riches in the gratification of his passions, had wandered from the end for which he was created, and had thus neglected to prepare himself for his last hour: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and he was buried in hell. And he said: Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my Father's house, for I have five brethren; that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torments." (*Lk.* xvi.)

But, my Brethren, we need not that any one should come from the dead to warn us, either of the certainty of death, or of the necessity of preparing for it, or of what is to follow after death. This parable gives us a sufficient warning, that, "It is appointed unto men once to die; and, after this, the judgment." (*Heb. ix. 27.*)

POINT I. Nothing is more certain than
It is certain the fact, that *we shall die*. The
we shall die. sentence of death is already passed;
 and it is universal. No power on
 earth, no riches or medical skill, can exempt us
 from that sentence, or remove its execution to a
 more distant period. The day will come, when
 each of us must bid adieu to this world; and that
 day is fixed; it is perhaps very near: we are not
 sure of another day, nor even of one single hour.

In the midst of your earthly solitudes, and
 anxious cares—while you are rejoicing in your
 gains, or in some temporal success, it may be said
 to you, as it was to that rich man who received his
 sentence of almost immediate death, when he was
 in the very act of exulting in the abundance of his
 stores: "Thou fool! this very night do they
 require thy soul of thee! and whose shall those
 things be, which thou hast provided?" (*Lk. xii. 20.*)
 There is not an instant, but some of our fellow-
 creatures are summoned into eternity, when, per-
 haps, they expect it as little as you do now: for
 "We know not at what hour our Lord will come."

(*Mt.* xxiv. 42.) Not a week passes, but we read of sudden deaths : such a death may happen to you, as well as it has to others : You have not a moment's security against death : "You know not the day nor the hour." (*Mt.* xxv. 13.)

POINT II. How necessary, therefore, it is, that you should prepare yourselves for death,—and that you should prepare for it immediately.

The great, and indeed the *only* business of your life, is to prepare yourselves for a good death. But, are you preparing ? in other words : Are you striving to die to the world, and to yourselves ? Are you labouring to mortify and subdue your passions, to root out your vices, and to replace them by habits of virtue ? Unless such be your endeavours, you are not preparing for your last hour ; and you cannot reasonably expect to die well : Yet, on dying well your *all* depends for eternity ! for, if once lost, you are lost for ever !

Would you be content to die in your present state of soul ? If your conscience answers that you would not ; it must be because you judge, that you are not living as you ought to do—that there is something in your life, which wants reforming. Why, then, do you not begin at once to reform what you thus know to be necessary ? Why do you continue to live on, each day, the same as before ; as if you expected the necessary reformation to come to you of its own accord, without the necessity

of your labouring to produce it? Or do you wait till death comes, before you will begin to prepare for it? That, my Brethren, is the time, when you should be already prepared! "Be ye *ready*, says our blessed Lord; because you know not what hour your Lord will come." (*Mt. xxiv. 42.*)

Just imagine yourselves, my Brethren, to be already seized with your last sickness—you, who are putting off the amendment of your lives. (There will be a time, when this will not be a mere imagination; but a fearful reality.) Imagine then, that, at the present time, and in your present state of soul, you are seized with some disease, which you know must quickly hurry you out of life. No sooner do you discover your danger, than your whole soul becomes alarmed and confused; and you hasten to send for your Pastor, with a thousand fears lest there should be any circumstance which may prevent him from coming immediately. He comes, and tells you that you must prepare for death, for that there is no time to lose; and he administers the last Sacraments to you. If such *were* the case with you at this moment, and in your present state of soul; what would be your sentiments—what your feelings, at the prospect of having, in a few hours, to give an account to God of your whole life? "Oh! that I had led a better life! (you would say within yourself.) Oh! that I had served God; rather than the world, and my passions! Oh! that I had renounced those fatal delusions!" How vain, my Brethren, and worth-

less, would this world and its possessions appear to you then ! how contemptible all its pleasures and enjoyments ! What bitter regret would seize upon your very inmost soul, at the remembrance of every sinful gratification of your passions ! “O ! that I had avoided those sins, you would exclaim, and had lived like a good Christian ! O ! that I had time to amend my life ! to repair my past misdeeds !” My Brethren, you have time now : why not, then, make a good use of it ?

Imagine still further, my Brethren, that your disorder is rapidly advancing to a close—that the fatal moment is just at hand : imagine that you feel the agonies of death upon you ; that a cold sweat breaks out all over you, that your eyes grow dim, that your hands and feet are cold and heavy, that your breathing has become difficult and gasping, and you are on the point of expiring. At this awful moment, your past sins, and your neglect of salvation, rush into your mind ! Oh ! what unutterable distress ! what anguish of soul ! what fearful alarms ! And amidst these you expire ! The attendants whisper : “He is dead—he is gone !”

POINT III.

What follows the moment of death.

But whither is he gone ? Before the judgment-seat of his God, to account for his whole life : for “It is appointed unto men once to die ; and, after this, the judgment.” (*Heb. ix. 27.*) “It came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by Angels

into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died,
 and he was buried in hell." (Lk. xvi. 22.) Yes, my
 Brethren; the very moment in which we depart
 out of this world, we are placed before an all-seeing
 Judge; our whole life is examined; sentence is
 passed upon us; and it is immediately executed!
 O most awful moment, which thus decides our lot
 for eternity! *How sorrowful. One of the Roman poets, like
 our life to our departure from a feast.*
 You see, then, my Brethren, the absolute neces-
 sity of preparing yourselves for death,—of preparing
 yourselves for it immediately,—and of keeping
 yourselves always prepared. "Blessed are those
 servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall
 find watching." (Lk. xii. 37.) *How anxious to enjoy the
 their friends a few moments longer. Alas! how short
 of such enjoyments! how unnatural the
 turmoil into which the worst & him who stay
 is really life in the best view, this unwillingness
 friends is the most amiable motive from which
 fear of death, & yet the longest enjoyment
 of this kind, is of so trivial a duration, that it is
 an truly contemptible. Few men, I own, think
 of death, till they are
 ever gigantic. Forbid me object this may appear
 reaches them, they are never the less incapable of
 distance; nay, this they have been very much
 lightened when they have apprehended themselves
 dying, they are no sooner cleared from this apprehension
 the fear of it are erased from their minds
 as! he who escapes from death is not pardoned
 surprised, & deprived of a short day. (FIELDING)*

SERMON XL.

The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY.

“Two men went up into the Temple to pray ; the one was a Pharisee, and the other a Publican.”
(Luke xviii. 10.)

We have here two very opposite characters, drawn by Almighty God himself : one, showing the malice and deformity of pride ; and the other, the beauty and loveliness of humility.

In the person of the Pharisee, we behold all that is arrogant, disdainful, and presumptuous : he places himself in the highest place of the Temple,—enumerates and extols his own pretended good works,—and can see nothing in himself but virtue—nothing for which he need implore God’s mercy. How still more hateful does his conduct appear in our eyes, when we see him, confident in his own supposed good works, treating his neighbour with contempt, and presumptuously preferring himself before others ?

But, in the person of the Publican, we observe quite a different conduct. He manifests a sincere and deep sense of his own unworthiness, which is a disposition of soul very pleasing to Almighty God, and effectual in moving him to mercy ; for, leaving to others the first places in the temple, he fixes himself in the lowest ; and there, with down-cast eyes, with a feeling sense of his own misery, and striking his breast, he supplicates the divine mercy for the pardon of his sins. “Therefore did this man return home justified rather than the other.”

In order to excite us to love and practise the virtue of humility, our blessed Lord has thus described to us its amiable character ; and its efficacy in moving God to mercy. It is on this virtue, that I intend to address you : I will first describe to you the *nature* of humility ; and then proceed to show its absolute *necessity*, and the inestimable *advantages* which it brings to our souls.

POINT I. According to the definition of St. Bernard, humility consists in “a true knowledge of one’s self, whereby we become sincerely contemptible in our own eyes.” It teaches us, that, of ourselves, we are nothing ; that our very being, and whatever qualifications or good we may possess, are all the gifts of God ; depending, not on any merit in us, but solely on the goodness and bounty of God : “Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.”

In what Humility consists.

(*James* i. 17.) It teaches us, that we are so far from deserving God's gifts, that, of ourselves, we deserve only punishments, on account of our sins.

Thus convinced of their own nothingness, misery, and sinfulness, truly humble Christians are afraid of making the least show of any good that is in them ; lest, becoming infected with vanity, they should rob God of any portion of that glory, which they know belongs only to him. And the more favours they receive from God, the more do they humble themselves ; because they know they may abuse those favours ; and that they will have a stricter account to give : for "unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required." (*Lk.* xii. 48.) See *Pride M.S. Bk. p. 6.*

The humble man, passing over everything in himself, but his nothingness and sins ; and considering in other persons the gifts of grace wherewith the Almighty has adorned them ; subjects himself, in his own heart, below all others, according to these words of the Apostle : "In humility, let each esteem others better than themselves ; each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's : for, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (*Phil.* ii. 3.)

Oh ! how pleasing, in the sight of God, is this humble disposition ! and how necessary and advantageous to our souls must humility be, which thus gives us such an insight into our own nothingness and sinfulness, while it shuts our eyes to the defects of others !

POINT II.
The necessity
of Humility.

Yes, my Brethren, the virtue of Humility is indispensably *necessary* for us—so necessary, that, without it, it is impossible for us to please God; who declares, that “he resisteth the proud,” and that it is only “to the humble he giveth his grace.” (1 *Pet.* v. 5.)

All Christians are convinced of the necessity of Baptism and Repentance for salvation; and their conviction is grounded on these express declarations of the Son of God: “Amen, amen I say to you, except a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;” and again: “I say unto you, except you ~~do penance~~, you shall all likewise perish.” (*John* iii. 5; *Lk.* xiii. 3, 5.) These strong expressions contain the most positive declarations of the necessity of these two means of salvation. Now, the same Son of God uses the same form of expression, to show the necessity of humility. For, when the disciples asked him, saying: “Who, thinkest thou, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus, calling to him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: Amen I say to you, except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (*Mt.* xviii. 3, 4.) You see, then, the strict necessity of humility: if you would obtain salvation, you must practise it—there is no going to heaven without it. But, when we

consider the advantages that are derived from the practice of it, shall we not look upon this, as a happy necessity ?

POINT III.

Advantages
of Humility.

For, inestimable are the advantages, which this virtue brings with it to the souls that possess it.

1. It brings with it all the other Christian virtues ; because it is (as it were) the very root, from which they spring, and by means of which they are preserved, and strengthened, and increased. For, in the same manner as a plant springs from its root, and draws all its nourishment from it ; and, as that root lies under ground, concealed from the eyes of men, and is trampled upon by them ; and yet is the source of life to the plant : so humility, as the root of virtues, hides itself from the sight of men ; and is despised and trampled upon by the world, as having nothing to recommend itself to their esteem ; and yet it is the principal source, from which all other Christian virtues draw their greatest lustre and excellency in the eyes of God. And the deeper our humility strikes its root, the more exalted will be our other virtues, that flow from it.

2. Humility makes us, in a particular manner, acceptable to God ; and draws down upon us the most abundant graces : “ To whom shall I have respect, (says Almighty God,) but to him that is poor and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words ? ” (*Is. lxvi. 2.*) And the

Holy Ghost declares, that, whilst "God resisteth the proud, to the humble he giveth grace." (1 *Pet.* v. 5.) "For the Lord is nigh (says the Psalmist) to them that are of a contrite heart; and he will save the humble of spirit." (*Ps.* xxxiii. 19.)

3. It is from humility, that prayer derives its wonderful efficacy in obtaining from God whatever we ask: "The prayer of him that humbleth himself, (says the Book of Ecclesiasticus, xxxv. 21,) shall pierce the clouds; and he will not depart, till the Most High behold." For, (adds the Psalmist,) "the Lord hath had regard to the prayer of the humble; and he hath not despised their petition." (*Ps.* ci. 18.)

4. To humble ourselves in the divine presence disarms the anger of the Almighty, provoked against us by sin, and moves him to mercy. Witness, for example, the wicked king Achab. For, though Almighty God had sent the Prophet Elias to denounce to him the terrible judgments, that were to fall upon him, in punishment of his crimes; yet, when Achab humbled himself before God on that account, God, with apparent surprise mixed with pleasure, called to Elias, and said: "Hast thou seen Achab humbled before me? Therefore, because he hath humbled himself for my sake, I will not bring the evil in his days." (3 *Kings* xxi. 29.)

Having now seen what humility is; that there is no progress to be expected in a spiritual life, without it; and that it is so powerful a means of drawing down upon us the mercy and blessings of heaven; let me entreat you, my Brethren, to use

your utmost endeavours to acquire it, and to practise it on every occasion that presents itself.

POINT IV. You cannot but be animated to
 The example this, if you look upon the example
 of J. Christ. of Jesus Christ, whose whole life
 was one continued lesson of humil-
 ity. "Learn of me, (he says,) because I am meek and
 humble of heart." (*Mt. xi. 29.*) "I am in the midst
 of you, as he that doth serve." (*Lk. xxii. 27.*) And
 "I have given you an example, that, as I have done
 to you, so you do also." (*John xiii. 15.*) "When he
 was reviled, (says St. Peter,) he did not revile ;
 when he suffered, he threatened not ; but delivered
 himself to them that judged him unjustly ; leaving
 us an example, that we should follow his steps."
 (*1 Pet. ii. 21, 22.*)

Moved by the example of our blessed Redeemer,
 let us humble ourselves before God. For, if Christ,
 our Model, humbled himself for our example, we
 cannot be his disciples, unless we endeavour to
 practise the like humility.

POINT V. And certainly, if we look into
 Motives for our own hearts, we shall find there
 being humble. more than sufficient to humble us
 to the very dust whereon we tread.

Let us, then, look into our own interior ; and the
 same question, which the Jews put to St. John the
 Baptist, let each one of us put to himself : "Who
 art thou ? what sayest thou of thyself ?" (*John i.*

19, 22.) And, my Brethren, when we behold in ourselves the darkness of our understanding, the perversity of our will, the inclinations of our heart towards evil, and the violence of our passions ;—when we consider our weakness in the little that we can do of the good we propose, our ingratitude in abusing the blessings of heaven, our folly in providing more for this transitory life, than for that which is eternal ;—when we reflect on the multitude of our sins, which are the sad consequences of all this perversity of our nature : when we consider these humiliating truths, what answer can we give to the question proposed, except that we, of all creatures, have the least reason to be proud ; for that we deserve nothing better than contempt and reproaches from all God's creatures ? Let us, then, take a view—a correct view, of our own interior ; and then we shall not have much difficulty in accounting ourselves the most unworthy of all. And let us bear in mind the promise of our blessed Lord, who assures us, that the more we abase and humble ourselves here in this life, the higher he will exalt us hereafter, in the kingdom of his glory : “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (*Lk. xiv. 11.*)

SERMON XLI.

The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE ABUSE OF GRACE.

“ But, by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace in me hath not been void.” (1 Cor. xv. 10.)

Would, my Brethren, that, like this Apostle, we could say, that we had never rendered void the graces, which God, in his goodness, has conferred upon us ! would that we had never neglected or abused those precious gifts of heaven !

Of these precious gifts of the Almighty, some are called *exterior* graces, and others *interior*.

POINT I.
Exterior
graces of
God.

The exterior graces of God are all those outward helps to salvation, which God provides for us : such as, a knowledge of the great mysteries of our Redemption,—the preaching of God's

ministers,—the exhortations of spiritual directors,—the good example of others,—pious reading, and the like. Thus, David was brought to a sense of his guilt, and to sincere repentance, by the reprehension of the prophet Nathan (*2 Kings* xii. 7, 13); the Ninivites at the preaching of Jonas (*Jonas* iii); the thief on the Cross, by beholding the example of patience, given by his dying Saviour. (*Lk.* xxiii. 41, 42.) Hence we must conclude, that these external graces are very powerful helps to salvation—that they are the occasions wherein God speaks inwardly to the heart.

But, what use have you hitherto made of them, my Brethren? What advantages have you received from them? What good effects have been produced in your souls, by so many instructions and exhortations which you have received? by your spiritual reading, and the good examples which you have witnessed? by so many ~~Confessions and~~ Communions? If you have abused these powerful helps to salvation, instead of profiting by them; then listen to the fearful threat that hangs over your head: “Behold, for these three years I come, seeking fruit on this fig-tree; and I find none: Cut it down, therefore; why cumbereth it the ground?” (*Lk.* xiii. 7.) “Take the unprofitable servant: bind his hands and his feet; and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (*Mt.* xxii. 13.) “Woe to thee Corozain! woe to thee Bethsaida! for if, in Tyre and Sidon, had been wrought the miracles, that have been

wrought in you, they had long since done penance in sackcloth and ashes !" (*Lk. x. 13.*) How many thousands of poor souls, less favoured than you, may rise up in condemnation against you at the last day, if you neglect to profit by so many opportunities of virtue, which God gives you ! Oh ! what a dreadful account will not such negligence bring upon you ! "Woe to thee, Corozain ! woe to thee, Bethsaida !" "Cut down the unfruitful fig-tree ; why cumbereth it the ground ?" "Take this unprofitable servant : bind his hands and his feet ; and cast him into the exterior darkness"—into that dismal dungeon, "where there will be perpetual weeping and gnashing of teeth !" Oh ! let these awful threats always echo in your ears ; and rouse you from slothful tepidity, to active fervour, and to a diligent cooperation with the graces of God !

POINT II.

Interior Graces.

But, my Brethren, if the neglect of these external graces thus exposes a soul to the wrath of heaven ; will not that wrath fall, with ten-fold vengeance upon those unhappy sinners, who neglect or abuse the *interior* graces of God ? These interior graces are operated in us by the Holy Ghost, in order to make known to us the ways of God, and induce us to love him ; in order to bring us back to the path of virtue, when we have wandered from it ; or to make us walk steadily therein.

These interior graces have been repeatedly conferred upon you. But what advantages have you

derived from them, my Brethren?—from so many lights and inspirations, communicated to your souls by the Holy Spirit? from so many good desires, urging you forward in God's service? from so many reproaches of conscience, recalling you from your wanderings to the path of duty? from so many inward motions of grace, whereby God solicits you to renounce your vicious habits, and to enter upon the practice of virtue?

By resisting these graces, my Brethren, what do you do? you resist (to use the words of Scripture, *Acts vii. 51.*)—you resist the Holy Ghost himself, who is the Author of them; you trample under foot the blood of Jesus Christ, who redeemed you; you make void (in your regard, at least) the merits of his Cross, by which even the least of these graces were purchased for you. (*Heb. x. 29.*)

POINT III. The alarming Consequences of abusing the grace of God.	The Almighty frequently punishes this neglect and abuse of his special graces, by the withdrawal and privation of them. The poor sinner, being then left in a great measure to himself, soon becomes hardened in iniquity, and reduced to a state of spiritual insensibility. (<i>Rom. xi. 8.</i>)
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Under the figure of Jerusalem besieged, and delivered up to the fury of its enemies, how emphatically does our blessed Redeemer describe to us the misery of the poor sinner, who is in this deplorable state of spiritual abandonment for abus-

ing the graces of heaven? Jerusalem had received graces so abundant, so distinguishing, that it had deserved to be called "*the holy city*." In it our divine Saviour had wrought many of his miracles; and had preached there the great truths of salvation. But that ungrateful people abused all his mercies; and the miseries which they brought upon themselves by their ingratitude, forced from his eyes tears of compassion: "And seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: if thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace: But now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee; and thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side; and beat thee flat to the ground: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." (*Lk. xix. 41.*)

How literally has this prediction been verified? For, Jerusalem—that favoured city, which God had taken under his special care, did, by its neglect and abuse of grace, so provoke his indignation, that it was made to drink deeply of the cup of his vengeance. The City was reduced to a heap of ruins; and its ungrateful inhabitants were either taken captives, or put to a miserable death.

But, my Brethren, it was not these temporal evils impending over that guilty city: it was not that its riches were about to fall into the hands of its enemies, and that it would lose its importance amidst the cities of the earth; it was not that it

would be beaten flat to the ground, and that a stone in it would not be left upon a stone—it was not these considerations, that forced tears of compassion from the eyes of the Son of God : but he wept over the spiritual blindness of its inhabitants—over their hardness of heart, which rendered them deaf to the voice of his mercy, and totally insensible to the impressions of his grace : he wept, because they would not know “the time of their visitation.”

My beloved Brethren, we, like the Jews, have received the choicest graces of the Almighty : let us take care, then, that we do not imitate them, in abusing these mercies, and in drawing down upon ourselves, by our ingratitude, the vengeance of heaven. For, the days will most certainly come, when the sinner, who is unfaithful to grace, shall, like Jerusalem, be surrounded and besieged by his enemies—when he shall be delivered up to the attacks of the devil, the world, and the flesh ; because he has not known the time of the visitation of his God. Because he has despised God’s special graces, he shall be deprived of these heavenly assistances ; his spiritual enemies shall cast a trench about him ; they shall seize upon the powers of his soul ; overthrow the spiritual edifice of his salvation ; and hurry him headlong into the horrors of everlasting perdition.

Of how many of us here present has not Almighty God reason to say what he said of the ancient Jews, under the parable of his vineyard ? “What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard, that I

have not done to it? Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes? and it hath brought forth wild grapes! And now I will show you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted: I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: it shall not be pruned; and it shall not be digged; but briars and thorns shall come up: and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it." (*Is. v.*) Terrible and alarming threat! But it is a threat, which, alarming as it is, has been executed upon thousands! How manifest are the effects of this terrible threat, in this our own nation; which was once the flourishing vineyard of the Lord, bringing forth good grapes in abundance! But behold the scene is altered! the hedge thereof has been taken away, its wall has been broken down, and the wild boar of heresy hath entered, and made dreadful havoc therein! a lamentable instance of the terrible consequences of abusing God's graces!

The Almighty has deigned, in his great mercy, to look down again favourably upon this vineyard—to cultivate it anew; and he has placed you therein, that you may bring forth good grapes. But, my Brethren, have you produced them? What have you done for your God, after all that he has done for you? Are you more exact in discharging the duties of your state of life; and more watchful against the occasions of sin? Are you humble of heart; and mortified in your lives? Are your affections disengaged from the world and your

passions, and placed on God alone? "What is there that he ought to do more to his vineyard, that he hath not done? He has favoured you with his choicest blessings; he has made you members of his Holy Church; he has heaped his graces upon you in profusion; and even given you himself, to be the spiritual food of your souls! in a word, he has given you every facility of knowing his divine will, and of putting it in practice, in order that you may come to possess him hereafter, in a happy eternity: "What is there that he could do more for you, that he has not done?"

And where, my Brethren, is the return you make for all these special favours? Oh! take heed, lest, by abusing them, you "treasure up for yourselves wrath against the day of wrath" (*Rom. ii. 5*); take care, that you do not provoke even the very mercies of God to rise up in judgment against you—that what God, in his goodness, intended to be the means of your salvation, be not converted, by your negligence, into the cause of your greater reprobation. Resolve, therefore, that henceforth, when God visits you with the calls and inspirations of his graces, you will use your utmost endeavours to correspond with them: "To-day, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (*Ps. xciv. 8.*) A ready and faithful correspondence with present grace is the surest means of drawing down more abundant graces for the future. Be punctual, therefore, in the discharge of all the duties of your state of life, however trivial they may appear to be; and

in the due performance of such exercises of piety and devotion, as you may have adopted in the regulation of your lives. For, to a steady fidelity in these things God attaches particular graces; and it is by cooperating with those graces, that we secure our salvation. Strive, my Brethren, to become, every day, more fervent, more humble, more mortified, more inflamed with divine love. By such means, you will be prepared for receiving the impressions of grace—for giving yourselves up to be conducted solely and entirely by the Spirit of God; and consequently, you will be enabling yourselves to say with St. Paul, in the words of this day's Epistle: "The grace of God in me hath not been void."

SERMON XLII.

The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON FREQUENTING THE SACRAMENTS.

"We have confidence through Christ towards God: not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." (2 Cor. iii. 4, 5.)

Religion teaches, that, of ourselves, without the aid of God's grace, we can do nothing towards our salvation (*John* xv. 5); but that, with his grace, we can do all that is necessary. (2 *Cor.* xii. 9; *Phil.* iv. 13.) And it is chiefly in the Sacraments, ~~and the Sacrifice of the Mass~~, that we are to obtain the graces necessary for saving our souls. When you receive the Sacraments worthily, ~~or assist at Mass devoutly~~, our blessed Lord applies his merits to your souls individually; and he applies them more or less abundantly, according as you are more or less disposed for receiving them.

You see here the great advantage of making a good and frequent use of these means of grace, and especially of the Holy Communion, wherein we receive a more abundant application of the merits of Christ, and a richer supply of his graces.

POINT I. And yet, how backward are
 We ought to many—very many ~~Catholics~~, in
 communicate. approaching to this divine Sacra-
 ment! and how many neglect it
 altogether! Christ invites you, and even commands
 you to come to him; his ministers exhort, entreat,
 and press you to yield to his invitations—to obey
 his command; and still you are backward and
 negligent, and you seek every excuse you can for
 staying away!

Our blessed Redeemer knew it would be so; he foresaw the vain excuses you would make—the real causes that would keep you away; and he has already announced to you, what will be the consequence of your self-delusion. Pay attention, my Brethren, to his parable on this subject: “A certain man made a great supper, and invited many.” (This is the banquet of the Holy Communion, which he has provided in his Church, and of which he invites you to partake.) “And he sent his servant at the hour of supper, to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready.” (Thus he sends his ministers to you, to exhort and press you to come.) “And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to

him : I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it ; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said : I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them ; I pray thee hold me excused. And another said : I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." (Thus some have to attend to their business, some to their merchandise, and others to their domestic affairs ; and they all fancy they cannot spare time for going to ~~Confession~~ ~~and~~ Communion, and so they stay away.) "Then the Master of the house being angry, said to his servant : Go out quickly into the streets, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame. But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited," (but who would not come,) "shall taste of my supper ;" by which is signified, that they shall be excluded eternally from the banquet of the kingdom of heaven. (*Lk. xiv. 16 to 24.*)

Again, Christ says : "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life ; and I will raise him up at the last day." But, (observe this :) "Amen, amen I say unto you : Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." (*John vi. 54.*) What command can be more positive than this, more urgent, and more necessary to be obeyed ?

Some say : 'I stay away because I am not worthy ; there is a command that I should not approach unworthily : "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own con-

demnation ;” because he “is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” (1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.)

But this is no reason, my Brethren, why you should *stay away* ; it only shows the necessity of being diligent and careful in *making your preparation*. For, (observe,) if there is a command that you should not receive unworthily, is there not also a command that you *shall receive* ? And if eternal condemnation is threatened to one, is it not also threatened to the other ? “None of those men that were invited, (but would not come,) shall taste of my supper.” “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.” By staying away, then, you are sure of condemnation ; but by receiving, you may escape it, because you can prepare yourselves for receiving worthily.

POINT II.
We ought to
communicate
frequently.

But, if it be necessary to go to Communion, it is necessary also to go often ; because the Sacraments are not only to give grace ; but also to increase it, and thereby to be the means of preserving it.

In the parable of the ten virgins, the five who are called foolish, because they let their lamps go out for want of oil, represent those unhappy Christians, who leave their souls to perish for want of applying to the Sacraments. The lamp is the soul, the light is the love of God, and the oil is God's grace, by which the fire of divine love is kept alive.

As the lamp will go out—as its light will soon become extinguished, if we neglect to pour in the oil ; so will the soul, in like manner, lose its supernatural life—divine love will become extinguished in it, unless we obtain a constant supply of grace, by approaching frequently to the Sacraments.

The Sacraments work their effects according to the signification of their sign. For instance, the sign of the Sacrament of Baptism is the application of water, or washing ; and accordingly it works this effect in the soul, by washing away sin. The sign of the Sacrament of the Holy Communion is bread and wine, or food ; and, indeed, the word bread, in Scripture, is used to express all the food by which a man lives ; as when it is said : “In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread.” (*Gen. iii. 19.*) The same effects, therefore, that food produces in the body, the Holy Communion works in the soul ; and as we cannot live unless we frequently take our corporal food, so we cannot maintain our spiritual or supernatural life, unless we have frequent recourse to the Holy Communion, which is the spiritual or supernatural food of the soul. So Christ expressly declares : “Amen, amen I say unto you : Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.” It is equally true therefore, with regard to the soul, as well as the body, that, if we do not eat, we cannot live.

In the first ages of the Church, going to Communion was a daily practice ; and hence it is, that

the lives of Christians then were so exemplary, so virtuous, that they are held out as an example to all succeeding ages. This is the effect—the happy effect of frequent communion ; for so Christ says : “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.” (*John* vi. 57.) In one of the parables, the Holy Communion is described as a marriage-feast (*Mt.* xxii. 2, 3, 4) ; it represents, therefore, the wedding between Christ and our soul ; by which our soul is united to him in such a manner, as to become one with him. He is the vine, we are the branches (*John* xv. 5) ; and it is by this Sacrament that the branches are united to the vine, and receive their nourishment from it, in such a manner as to be enabled to bring forth abundance of fruit. (*John* xv. 5.)

We read that the first Christians, strengthened and supported by this Sacrament, heard, without fear, the threats of persecutors ; endured, with patience and constancy, the cruelties of their tormentors ; and were enabled to meet death even with joy and exultation. But now, in these days of sloth and tepidity, in which the Sacraments are so much neglected, the fear of losing a few shillings is a great temptation to induce a person to give up the practice of Religion !

Knowing the necessity and great advantages of frequent Communion, the ~~Council of Trent~~ “admonishes, exhorts, implores, and entreats all Christians to ~~venerate~~ the sacred mysteries of our Lord’s body and blood with such devotion, piety, and reverence

of mind, that they may be able to receive *frequently* this ~~super-substantial~~ bread." (*Conc. Trid., Sess. 13, de Euch., cap. 8.*)

I will now conclude by exhorting you, in accordance with the Council of Trent, to be regular and frequent in approaching to the Holy Sacraments: and in exhorting you to this pious practice, I am most anxious to induce you to adopt it. O that I could make you really feel its importance, its advantages, and the happiness which you would derive from it! If you wish to experience the benefits, and to feel the happiness of your Religion, go frequently, my Brethren, to the Sacraments of ~~Penance and~~ Holy Communion.

SERMON XLIII.

The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON CONTINUAL PENANCE.

“There met him ten men who were lepers,...who lifted up their voice, saying : Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” (Luke xvii. 12, 13.)

As leprosy is a figure of sin, these ten lepers represent to us penitent sinners lamenting their sins before their offended God, and craving his mercy and forgiveness.

We read in the Book of Lamentations, that the Prophet Jeremias, bewailing the iniquities of the Jewish people, exhorted and most earnestly entreated them to appease the anger of the Almighty, and to avert his heavy judgments, which their crimes had deserved, by employing for that purpose the tears of sincere and fervent repentance : “Let tears

(he said) run down like a torrent day and night ; give thyself no rest ; and let not the apple of thine eye cease : pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord." (*Lam.* ii. 18.) By these same words, I also admonish and entreat you, my Brethren, to lament your sins sincerely before God, that, having washed them away with the tears of true repentance, your souls, thus purified from guilt, may, at their departure hence, escape those severe judgments, which otherwise God will then execute upon them.

POINT I.

Our repentance for sin should be continued as long as we live.

It is a point of ~~Catholic~~ Faith, that, without sincere repentance, a sinner can never obtain pardon from God, nor hope to escape condemnation after death. Our

Religion teaches, that, when we have had the unhappiness to offend God by ~~mortal~~ sin, our repentance cannot be commenced too soon ; and that, being commenced, it ought never to end but with our life ; according to the express declaration of the Council of Trent, which says : "The life of a Christian ought to be a perpetual penance. (*Sess.* xiv, *cap.* 9, *Doctr. de Extr. Unct.*)" It is true, indeed, that a sinner who approaches, with sincere repentance, ~~to the Sacrament of Penance~~, and complies with the conditions which Almighty God requires from him—it is true, that such a sinner obtains the pardon of his offences. Nevertheless, as we can have no assurance that our repentance

and compliance have been such, without a particular revelation from God ; and as, even then, there is still remaining a debt of temporal punishment, which, if not discharged, during life, by the fervour of repentance, will be exacted after death, most rigorously, by the justice of God ; it behoves us not only to repent of our past sins, but to lament them during the whole remainder of our lives : “ Let tears, then, run down day and night ; give thyself no rest ; and let not the apple of thine eye cease ; ” for “ the life of a Christian is a perpetual penance ; ” “ I have laboured in my groanings ; every night I will wash my bed ; I will water my couch with my tears.” (*Ps. vi. 7.*)

It is only by the sincerity and fervour of our repentance, that a perfect reconciliation with God can be effected. Now, the sincerity and fervour of our repentance are manifested by its duration. For, a true penitent, ever sensible of the enormity of his crimes, and of the great insults offered to the infinite Majesty of God, can never bring himself to think that he has repented enough ; and so he continues to look upon himself always as an unhappy criminal, guilty of high treason against his God : he continues therefore to supplicate for mercy, imploring forgiveness by the voice of his tears. Oh ! happy tears of true repentance, “ which perform for us with God (says St. Hilary) the office of Ambassadors ; and obtain for us, through the divine mercy, the pardon of our offences.” Let us, then, like the penitent David, not allow a single night to pass,

without “watering our couch with penitential tears.” Oh! what a happy occupation—what a source of comfort and consolation, to continue thus to weep over the disorders of our past life! what an assured comfort does it give to a sinner of obtaining mercy from that good and merciful God who assures us, that “he will never despise a contrite and humble heart” (*Ps.* l. 19); who declares, that he “desires not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (*Ezech.* xxxiii. 11); and who has promised to receive back every true penitent, who calls upon him for mercy! (*Ezech.* xxxiii. 12, 14, 15, 16; *Is.* i. 18.)

POINT II.
Examples
of sincere
penitents.

In the Lives of the Holy Fathers S
~~of the Desert~~—those illustrious penitents, who have edified the Church by the fervour of their repentance, more than they had scandalized her

by the enormity of their transgressions—in their lives we find it related of them, that, after they had spent many years in bewailing their past sins, ~~and in practising rigorous works of penance,~~ they still entertained a fearful uncertainty, whether God had entirely blotted out those stains of sin which they thus lamented.

1. It is related, for instance, of Saint Thais, that, after having led a very wicked life, she was happily brought to a sense of duty, and became a true penitent; that, retreating from the world, she shut herself up in solitude; and that she there passed

three whole years in weeping bitterly over the disorders of her past life, thus offering a holy violence to heaven by her sighs and tears. And so sensible was she of the great evil of sin, that she did not once dare, during the whole of that period, even so much as to pronounce the sacred name of God ; but her constant prayer was : "Thou who hast made me, have mercy on me !" Such were the dispositions and sentiments, which animated this holy penitent.

In the Sacred Scriptures, also, we find recorded similar examples of true penitents, who, although assured by God himself of the pardon of their sins, continued nevertheless to lament them, during the remainder of their days.

2. Thus, in the Eleventh Chapter of the Second Book of Kings, it is related of King David, that he fell into two grievous crimes of adultery and murder ; and, in the following Chapter, it is further related, that God sent to him the Prophet Nathan, to reprehend him for these crimes, and so to bring him to a sense of duty ; and that David had no sooner heard the reprehension of the Prophet, than, with sentiments of sincere sorrow, he exclaimed : "I have sinned against the Lord !" Whereupon the Prophet was inspired to assure him, that "the Lord had taken away his sin."

Yet, David did not, on that account, cease to lament his fall ; but continued to weep for having been so unhappy, as ever to have offended his God ; every night, as he himself assures us, watering his

couch with his tears. The Psalms, which he composed, abound with expressions which show the penitential dispositions of his heart ; as when he says : “ Rebuke me not, O Lord, in thine indignation ; nor chastise me in thy wrath. There is no peace for my bones, because of my sins. I have laboured in my groanings ; every night I will wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears. Wash me yet more from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin ; because I know mine iniquity, and my sin is always before me. Through the voice of my groaning, my bone hath cleaved to my skin. For I did eat ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping. Lord, I am ready for scourges ; and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity, and I will think for my sin. Hear me speedily, O Lord ; my spirit hath fainted away, my heart within me is troubled. Turn to me, O Lord, and deliver my soul : Oh ! save me for thy mercy’s sake.” (*The seven Penitential Psalms.*)

Thus did this holy penitent continue to sigh and weep and afflict his soul, at the remembrance of his past sins. Oh ! what a moving example it was for his subjects, to hear these sighs and lamentations of their King—to see him thus weeping over his crimes, for years after they had been committed !

3. Again, in the Seventh Chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke, it is recorded of St. ~~Mary~~ Magdalen, that, after having withered the flower of her youth in a libertine and impure life, she sincerely repented, and was assured of the forgiveness of her sins by the

Son of God himself: "He said unto her: Thy sins are forgiven thee." Yet, she did not, on that account, discontinue the repentance which she had so happily commenced. Our divine Redeemer, who saw the torrents of tears wherewith she watered his feet, did not say to her: "Weep not," as he had said to the widow of Naim, who was lamenting the death of her only son. (*Lk. vii.*) No, my Brethren, the tears of Magdalen were on account of sin; and therefore they were permitted to flow. It was by the enormity of sin, that she measured her repentance; and therefore she wished to set no bounds to it. And, accordingly, she devoted the whole remainder of her days to repentance and penance.

4. Of St. Peter, in like manner, it is related, in the Twenty-second Chapter of the same Gospel, that, after he had thrice denied his divine Lord and Master, he was immediately touched with sincere repentance; and that, "going out, he wept bitterly." Yet, the bitterness of his weeping did not shorten its duration. For, St. Clement, his disciple and successor, in order to make us understand the continuance and intensity of Peter's repentance, says of him, that his very cheeks were furrowed, by reason of the abundance of his tears; and that he could never hear the cock crow, without falling on his knees, shedding torrents of tears, to implore the divine mercy and forgiveness.

These, my Brethren, were true penitents indeed. They did not content themselves, as so many do, with merely reciting a few acts of contrition for

their sins, and then thinking no more of them. No ; they wept for them ; they wept for them bitterly ; and they continued to do so, as long as they continued to live. They bore in mind, that they had offended a God, whose Majesty is infinite ; and as they were not able to make an infinite atonement, they endeavoured to supply their inability, by the fervour and the duration of their repentance.

My Brethren, let us look upon these holy penitents, as models whom the Almighty holds out to us for our imitation. If we have imitated them in their fall—if we, like them, have committed mortal sin, let us endeavour to imitate them also in the fervour of their repentance. Therefore, let us humble our souls before our offended God, deploring our sinfulness ; and let us crave pardon daily, in the words of the penitent David : “Hear, O Lord, my supplication ; give ear to my tears. Turn to me, O Lord, and deliver my soul ; O save me for thy mercy’s sake.” (*Ps. xxxviii. 13 ; vi. 5.*) In imitation of Magdalen, let us frequently prostrate ourselves in spirit at the feet of Christ, that we may move him to mercy. And, like St. Peter, let us melt into feelings of compunction, whenever any circumstances connected with our sins brings them to our recollection.

Let us, moreover, on all occasions, humble ourselves under the rod of God’s justice, by receiving, in a spirit of penance, all those afflictions, crosses, and mortifications, which are the just chastisements of sin. Let us not (like Simon of Cyrene) take up

our cross from mere compulsion ; but let us willingly follow our Redeemer to Calvary, by carrying our cross after him, and by suffering with him—by taking part with the justice of God against ourselves.

If we act in this manner, we cannot fail to move God to mercy ; and when our last moments approach, oh ! then shall we have the unspeakable consolation to think, that, though we had offended the mercy of God by our sins, we have endeavoured to satisfy his justice by a life of repentance ~~and penance~~ ! Then shall we be convinced, that they, who now sow in tears, shall reap in joy (*Ps.* cxxv. 5) ; and that they who now weep and mourn, shall then be comforted ! (*Mt.* v. 5.) Then shall we experience the truth of these words of the penitent David : “According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts, O Lord, have given joy to my soul.” (*Ps.* xciii. 19.)

SERMON XLIV.

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON HEAVEN.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice."
(Matt. vi. 33.)

When our blessed Lord wished to induce his followers to lay aside all over-solicitude for the things of the present life, what more powerful means could he employ for this purpose, than to propose to us an object so worthy of our pursuit as the *kingdom of heaven*?—that glorious kingdom, for the sake of which, the Apostles not only quitted their earthly possessions, and renounced all their prospects in this life; but suffered, moreover, even with joy, so many labours, fatigues, and persecutions, which they had to undergo in the establishment of our holy Religion;—that great and glorious kingdom, for the gaining of which, the Martyrs endured so many torments, and even sacrificed their very life; reflecting, like St. Paul, that "the sufferings of this present time, which are light and momentary, are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." (*Rom. viii. 18*;

2 Cor. iv. 17.) And it is to the greatness of this future glory that I wish now to direct your attention.

POINT I.

The happiness
of Heaven is
inconceivable.

Vain would be any attempt to describe the happiness of heaven : for this would be no less, than an attempt to describe the *divine Attributes*—the *infinite Perfections of the Deity*, wherein that happiness consists. As material things, which are the only objects that can be perceived by our limited senses, and are the only ones therefore from which our ideas are formed—as these material things constitute no portion of the felicity of the Blessed in heaven ; we must *necessarily* be incapable, not only of *describing*, but even of *conceiving* what that happiness really is : “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

In order, however, to form *some faint idea* of the happiness of heaven, consider that it is the glorious Kingdom which our great Creator has prepared, in order to display to his beloved servants the riches of his mercy, and the bounteous effects of his power and goodness ; and in which he communicates to them *Himself* in all his Majesty, and with all the charms of his infinite sweetness ! Now, if the punishments which he has prepared for the wicked in hell, are so very severe and intense, that it is beyond the power of man to conceive them—if the divine justice is so terrible, as to effect so much in

punishing ; what will not his love, his mercy, and his bounty, which (wherever man is concerned) are the dearest of the Attributes of God—what will not these effect in rewarding ? If the divine love towards us could even induce *God* to become *Man*, in order to purchase the redemption of *sinners* ; what will not that same love prompt him to do for his *faithful and beloved servants*, in manifesting to them the excess of his goodness, and in heaping upon them the riches of his bounty ?

POINT II.

The heavenly
Jerusalem as
depicted in the
Apocalypse.

Although, as was just now observed, *material* objects form no portion of the happiness of heaven ; yet the Holy Spirit, condescending to the weakness of our limited conception, represents to us the glory of heaven under the figure of such things, as we admire the most in this world.

Speaking of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Sacred Text says, that its walls are of precious stones, and its streets of pure and transparent gold ; that these streets are watered with the bright crystal streams of the river of the water of life, flowing from the throne of God ; and that, on the banks of this river, on both sides, grows the tree of life, yielding its fruits every month ; that there shall be no night, nor any want of sun or moon ; for, that the glory of God hath enlightened it ; that the Saints who dwell in this city, shall be the sons of God, who will wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and death shall be no more,

nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more ; but that they shall reign for ever and ever. (*Apoc.* xxi, xxii.) In this picture, which is taken from the twenty-first and twenty-second Chapters of the Apocalypse, we cannot but be struck with admiration at such an assemblage of happiness, grandeur, and magnificence. Yet, however splendid, however desirable all this may appear, the happiness of the Elect does not consist in it ; for the Kingdom of heaven possesses something *infinitely* more precious than all this. For there it is given to the Angels and Saints to contemplate, in the very presence of the Deity, his infinite Perfections, where whatever can give them delight is presented before them all together in one assemblage of glories ; and by this blissful contemplation, they are absorbed perpetually in ecstasies of delight !

POINT III.

We shall be associated in heaven with the Saints & Angels.

Oh ! should *we*, my Brethren, be so happy as to arrive hereafter at that blissful abode ; we shall there be associated for ever with all these blessed spirits and Saints of God, with them to enjoy this unspeakable happiness ! Yes, we

shall there be associated with the Angels and Archangels, with the Cherubim and Seraphim, who are all to be our Companions in glory ;—with that innumerable host of sacred Virgins, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,—of generous Martyrs, who, having sealed their faith with their blood, are

now crowned with honour and glory by him who sitteth upon the throne,—of holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and other Saints, all bearing the emblems of their victories, and with exultation singing hymns of praise to the divine Bounty;—~~and, above all, the Blessed Mother of the world's Redeemer—the glorious Queen of the heavenly Sion, seated on a throne of glory, exalted above the Cherubim and Seraphim.~~

Oh! what an additional joy will this glorious society be to our felicity, all rejoicing at, and participating in, each other's happiness as their own! If our heart will not *then* be able to contain its own joy, what overwhelming delight must we feel under such an accumulation of felicity!

POINT IV. We shall see & enjoy God.	But <i>that</i> which is the completion of the beatitude of the Blessed in heaven— <i>that</i> in which their happiness essentially consists, is <i>the sight and possession of God himself</i> . For although heaven abounds with every good, yet it possesses but one <i>Sovereign Good</i> , which is TO SEE GOD INCES- SANTLY—TO BEHOLD HIM FACE TO FACE!
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In this Beatific Vision is comprised the whole felicity of the heavenly Paradise: from it, as from an inexhaustible source, every enjoyment proceeds. For, “To see the face of the Living God, exclaims St. Augustine, is *the supreme Good*,—the joy of the Angels and of all the Saints;—the everlasting source of bliss,—the internal and external joy that delight-

eth the paradise of God ;—the plenitude of happiness,—the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.” (*Solil.* xxxvii.)

As soon, therefore, as a soul is secured in the possession and enjoyment of her God, she is sovereignly happy ; and that insatiable thirst, which, in this life, was ever hurrying her forward in pursuit of happiness, is perfectly satisfied—she has obtained the object of ALL her desires.

Our delightful occupation will then be, to contemplate eternally the Perfections of the Almighty, whereby our souls will be overwhelmed continually with new raptures of divine love ; and will be quite lost in the immensity and the incomprehensibility of their God. Oh ! when will that happy moment come, which, closing our eyes for ever to this world, will open them *to see God face to face*—to behold him arrayed in all the charms of his infinite Perfections !

But, my Brethren, “our sojourning is prolonged” (*Ps.* cxix. 5)—we must labour yet a little while in this land of misery ; in which, however, we should always consider ourselves as pilgrims, making the best of our way to our true country. We should imitate the conduct of the Jews, in the longing desire which they had, during their Babylonish Captivity, to return to Jerusalem. For when, sitting by the rivers of Babylon, they were asked by their Conquerors to sing for them the Canticles of Sion, they wept, and exclaimed : “How can we sing the canticles of the Lord, in *a foreign land* ?” (*Ps.*

xxxxvi.) Such ought to be our longing desire after the heavenly Jerusalem ; for which we should consider the present life, as merely a preparation. For this life is only a state of trial—a few days granted to us for the purpose of preparing ourselves to be admitted into the joys of the heavenly Jerusalem.

It depends, therefore, upon ourselves, with the help of God's grace, (which will not be wanting,) to obtain that eternal happiness intended for us.

This is a work which each of us has it in his power to accomplish ; but for the accomplishment of which, vigorous and persevering endeavours to walk in the path of virtue are required from us. And can you, my Brethren, esteem this too much, when you look forward and behold that eternal weight of glory, which is to be your recompense ?

But, were even the splendour and delights of Paradise insufficient to awaken your exertions ; can you be inactive, or indifferent, when you reflect, that you are placed between the two extremes of being either infinitely happy, or infinitely miserable, for an endless eternity ? Oh ! this reflection ought to call forth your most strenuous exertions in an affair of *so great importance* !

Pursue then, my Brethren, the path of virtue with redoubled vigour ; endeavouring so to run, that you may obtain the prize. (1 Cor. ix. 24.) Seek the *kingdom of God*, before all things (Mt. vi. 33) ; and labour with your utmost diligence and perseverance, while you continue here, to secure to yourselves its future and eternal enjoyment.

SERMON XLV.

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON NEGLECTING TO PREPARE FOR DEATH.

“Behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his Mother ; and she was a widow.” (Luke vii. 12.)

Men who are fondly attached to this present life easily persuade themselves that they have many years to live—they look upon death as at a distance ; and though the most striking examples of persons snatched away by sudden death, or hurried out of life in the bloom of youth, are repeatedly placed before their eyes, they either pass them by without reflection ; or vainly assure themselves, that they shall not be of that number.

My Brethren, consider attentively the affecting event, which the Evangelist places before your eyes in the words which I have just quoted : “ Behold a

dead man was carried out, the only Son of his Mother." This "only son" had as much reason to look forward to many years of life, as any of us here present. He had just arrived at the prime of life; and perhaps flattered himself with the delusive assurance of many years of enjoyment yet to come. But death came suddenly upon him, ("like a thief in the night" *Apoc.* iii. 3,) and frustrated all those vain expectations of life and enjoyment, which he had probably entertained.

This, my Brethren, is a subject for serious reflection: let us, therefore, think seriously upon it.

You know, that you *must die*—it would be useless to prove it to you. You know, likewise, that you *may die at any moment*—that "The Son of Man will come, like a thief in the night, at the hour when you expect him the least" (*Apoc.* iii. 3; *Lk.* xii. 40): You know, moreover, that, if you would die happily, you must die prepared; but, that you cannot expect to die prepared, if you neglect the work of preparation. All this you know; but do you act according to these important truths? Do you prepare for your last hour?

POINT I. To "provide for our last End" (*Deut.* xxxii. 29), is our whole business on earth—the only business that is really necessary. We can have no business of so great importance to us, as our preparation for a good death; we can have none, which, should it fail, will

be more lamentable in the sad consequences of its failure. And yet, there is nothing about which men concern themselves so little, as about preparing for death; every thing else is attended to, whilst this is neglected! They think of dying well; and yet wait till death overtakes them, before they will begin to prepare themselves for it!

My Brethren, do you act in this way in the common concerns of life? in affairs relating to your own honour, interest, or pleasure? If, for example, you had purchased an Estate; would you neglect to examine whether the title-deeds were safe, whether the land was good, and whether you had the means of paying for it, until the hour in which you would have to make the purchase? Or, if you had to maintain your rights against the unjust claims of one of your neighbours, by appealing to a court of justice; would you neglect to put your case into the hands of some able Lawyer, to give him proper instructions, to provide witnesses, and whatever else would be necessary to secure sentence in your favour—would you neglect this, till the time when the case would have to be decided? Most assuredly you would not. Why, then, do you neglect your preparation for death, (which is an affair of infinitely greater importance,)—why do you neglect this, till death overtakes you? “Be ye ready, (says our Saviour,) because you know not the day nor the hour.” (*Lk.* xii. 40.)

What would you think of a Captain of a ship, making a voyage on a dangerous sea, who had neg-

lected to see that his vessel, and all things necessary for sailing, were in good condition, until he was overtaken by a storm, and on the point of being wrecked? or of a General going to war, who did not begin to provide arms and the other necessities for war, until he came up with the enemy, and had to commence the battle? My Brethren, take care that such be not your case: for death is that dangerous voyage, by which men have to pass from time to eternity, amidst rocks and tempests; it is that fearful engagement, in which the soul is surrounded by her most determined enemies, and is attacked by them then with greater violence than before.

POINT II.
Consequences
of neglecting
preparation.

Represent to yourselves, my Brethren, a man who has been putting off his preparation for death all his life, thinking, that, because he was young or healthy, death was far from him: represent to yourselves such a man overtaken by his last sickness.

That sick man sees death fast approaching, and himself unprepared! What can he do? or rather, what does he do? Compare this with what, in his circumstances, it is necessary for him to do. And in order to see more clearly the awfulness of the circumstances wherein he is placed, imagine yourselves to be in his chamber, standing by his bedside, and observing all that passes there:

The poor sick man, as he lies on the bed of death,

reflects on the state of his soul. Oh ! what a melancholy reflection ! He becomes agitated, terrified ! He sends for his ~~Confessor~~, hoping to receive, from him at least, some consolation in his distress. When his ~~Confessor~~ enters, the dying man looks upon him with confusion and alarm : The very sight of his Pastor reminds him of his past misconduct ! He reflects, how, while in health, he disregarded his advice, and turned a deaf ear to his admonitions : and amidst these melancholy reflections, his Pastor tells him that he must prepare himself for death !

But is he in a fit state to make this preparation ? One part of his preparation consists in receiving the last Sacraments, which, to the just man, at the hour of death, are a source of the greatest comfort ; but how will they afford consolation to a soul, dying in the slavery of sin ?

Those last Sacraments are, however, received in some way ; and, in the meantime, the sick man begins to be struggling in the agonies of death ; whilst the Minister of God endeavours to give him consolation, by reciting over him the prayers of the Church. These prayers are calculated to comfort and encourage the virtuous Christian ; but what comfort can they give to a man, who finds in them a bitter reproach in every word that he hears ?

“Go forth, Christian soul, out of this world,” are the awful words in which the Minister of God addresses him ! Oh ! what an alarming farewell to an expiring sinner ! how heart-rending to one who

is attached to the world—who has loved perhaps nothing else, but the world and its cheating vanities! “Go forth, Christian soul, out of this world”—its honours, riches, and pleasures, upon which thou hast hitherto placed thy affections, and which thou hast preferred before the service of thy God, are now no more for thee!

“Let thy place be this day in peace, (continues the Priest,) and thy abode in the holy Sion.” When he hears his Pastor pronounce over him this tender wish of the Church, what must be his thoughts? what must his feelings be? knowing as he does, that there is but little ground for expressing this wish in his favour!

The Priest goes on: “Have compassion, O Lord, on his sighs; have compassion on his tears!” But can he expect, that the Almighty will have any regard to tears, which spring from a fondness for this world, and from his being obliged to quit it? If he weeps merely because he is cut short in his sinful life, can he expect that his weeping will find acceptance with the Almighty?

Good God! to what a wretched condition is this poor dying sinner reduced! being racked with grief and despair; and every word that he hears only adding to his grief and increasing his apprehensions! Oh! what gloomy forebodings must prey upon his soul, when the disorders of his past life rush in upon his recollection, and appear before him in all their enormity! when the thought of the future fills his soul with horror; and he feels himself sinking into

the gulf of eternity, there to be buried in everlasting flames !

He would not reflect upon these awful truths, while he could have done it with advantage to his soul ; now he reflects upon them in spite of himself, but his reflections produce no other effect, than anguish and despair !

He now sees the importance of serving God by leading a virtuous life, and that every thing else is vanity ; because death has opened his eyes to see things as they really are. Let these reflections, my Brethren, open your eyes now, while you have it in your power to prevent yourselves from being overtaken by death, before you have begun to make your preparation for it.

Oh ! begin, my Brethren, from this moment, the necessary work of your preparation for death. And with this view, examine what your lives have hitherto been ; and what they are at present ; and also what your thoughts would be, if you were, this very moment, going to be called to an account before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ. Consider attentively, how you have hitherto discharged the particular duties belonging to your state of life ; and how you discharge them at the present time—whether you are careful to regulate your conduct, in all things, according to the rules of the Gospel of Christ ; or rather, whether there are not many things, which, if you were now going to die, you would grieve for having done ; and many duties also, which you would, in like manner, grieve for having neglected ?

Examine yourselves, therefore, upon these points ; and be resolved to amend whatever you find amiss in your lives ; and put yourselves now into such dispositions, as you would wish to be in at the time of your death. “Let your loins be girt, (says our blessed Lord,) and lamps burning in your hands ; and you yourselves like to men, who are waiting for their Lord. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching : And if he shall come in the second watch, or if he shall come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.” (*Lk.* xii. 35 to 38.) Therefore, my Brethren, “watch :” hold yourselves in readiness to meet death at any moment : and then will your death, like that of the Saints, “be precious in the sight of God ;” for then may you confidently hope, that you will “die the death of the just, and that your last end will be like unto theirs.” (*Psa.* cxv. 15 ; *Num.* xxiii. 10.)

SERMON XLVI.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

“Brethren : I pray you...that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts ; that being rooted and founded in Charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the Saints, what is the length, and breadth, and height, and depth ;...that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.” (Eph. iii. 17, 18, 19.)

These words of St. Paul are an earnest supplication to God, in behalf of the faithful : he prays that the great precept of charity, by which we are commanded to love God above all things, may be deeply rooted in our hearts ; and that, by meditating upon *“the length, and breadth, and height, and depth”*

(that is to say, upon the infinite extent) of the goodness and love of God, the divine virtue of charity may become so perfectly established in our souls, that we “may be filled” with it “unto all the fulness of God.” And the earnest manner in which the Apostle expresses himself, in this and other passages of his Epistles, on the subject of charity, shows at once both the great importance in which he held this divine precept, and also his tender solicitude for the faithful, which thus led him to pour forth his earnest supplications to God for their advancement in charity.

But still more impressive is the language, wherein Almighty God delivered this great commandment of divine love to his chosen people in the old Law ; as we read in the Sixth Chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. In the Gospel also, we find the same commandment repeated by Jesus Christ in these words : “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with all thy strength.” (*Mk. xii. 30.*)

The Points, to which I wish to call your attention, are these two : *first*, the pressing *motives* which we have to love God, from the consideration of his boundless Perfections, whereby he is infinitely *good in himself*, and infinitely *good to us* ; and, *secondly*, the *happy effects*, which the love of God produces in those who possess it.

POINT I. In the first place, then, the divine
 Motives for perfecting—the amiability of God,
 loving God. (which should move us to love him
 for his own sake, or with what is
 called a *love of benevolence*,) are a subject too exalted
 for man to treat! The human mind is too limited
 to be able to conceive how perfect—how amiable
 Almighty God is *in himself*. But, although our
 minds cannot conceive, nor our tongues express the
 adorable Perfections of God; our *hearts* (says St.
 Augustine) can *love Him*. For if we love not that
 great Being, who possesses in himself all grandeur
 and perfection—all that is amiable and lovely; *on*
what, my Brethren, can we place our affections?
to whom shall we give our hearts, if not TO HIM,
 who is the God of unbounded goodness and mercy, of
 inconceivable splendour, beauty, and magnificence?
 to behold whose face, in the language of the same
 Saint, is the joy of the Angels and of all the Saints;
 the everlasting source of bliss; the fulness of happi-
 ness to man, and the completion of his glory; the
 internal and external joy, that delighteth the
 paradise of God.” (*Solil. c. 37, n. 2 and 3.*)

*Can you refuse your love to a God so perfect, so
 amiable, and in every way so deserving of your
 love?*

But, besides these motives of charity, arising from
 the consideration of the boundless Perfections of God,
 by which he is infinitely good in himself, and which
 ought to make us love him for his own sake, or with
 a love of benevolence; there are other motives for

loving God, arising from the consideration of his *infinite goodness towards us*, which ought to move us to love him with what is called a *love of gratitude*.

It is from God that you receive all the blessings you enjoy, whether in the order of nature or of grace. Now, if the benefits, which you receive from another, give him a just claim to a return of your gratitude and love; what ought to be your love of God, from whom you have received, in this life, the most inestimable benefits, and from whom you hope to receive, in the life to come, the never-fading crown of immortal glory? *

In order, therefore, to enkindle in your hearts the *love of gratitude*, which you owe to the Almighty, reflect on the innumerable blessings which he has conferred upon you. For know you not, that it is he who has drawn you out of nothing, and given you the very being which you enjoy; that he is continually watching over you, and preserving you from falling back into your original nothing? Know you not, that it is from *his* bounty, that you derive all the temporal good you possess, your health, your talents, your daily support, your comforts, and conveniences; in a word, your very selves and all that belongs to you?

If these favours *in the order of nature* call loudly upon you (as they do) for a return of your gratitude and love; how much more the inestimable blessings, which have been conferred upon you *in the order of* GRACE?

When a generous nature is thus treated,

Man was created in the state of innocence ; but he lost that innocence by sin, and became the slave of satan, and liable to eternal condemnation. Now, in order to deliver us from this unhappy state, God, in his goodness and mercy, gave his only-begotten Son to be our Redeemer ; and the Son of God, out of pure love for us, has delivered himself up to contempt, to reproaches, to sufferings, to the cruel and ignominious death of the Cross, in order to purchase our Redemption.

What an excess of charity, my Brethren ! how *dearly*, how *tenderly*, has he loved us ! What is there that he could do for us more than he has done ? Oh ! if the very last of men—if the bitterest enemy even, were to confer upon you such distinguishing marks of kindness and affection, how completely would such treatment gain your hearts ? how sensibly you would feel his kindness ? and how ready would you be to testify your gratitude, by returning him love for love ? And will you not, then, love your God, from whom you have received *infinitely more than all the men in the world* could possibly bestow upon you ; who is continually heaping his favours and blessings upon you ; and who not only condescends to *permit*, but even *commands* you to love him—you who are but dust and ashes, and whose being is as nothing in his sight ? (*Is. xl. 17.*) “What am *I* to God, exclaims St. Augustine, that he should command such an insignificant being to love him ?”

But that HE, who is the great Creator of heaven

and upholds our world.

and earth, “the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (*Apoc.* xvii. 14); whose magnificence is raised above the heavens, and whose glory is chanted by the choirs of blessed Spirits;—HE, in whose presence the very pillars of heaven tremble; who is terrible, and whose power there is none to withstand;—that HE, my Brethren, should be solicitous—*so solicitous*, to be loved by *such mean and insignificant* creatures as *we* are, is an excess of goodness and mercy, that can never be sufficiently loved and admired!

Oh! let us never grow weary of loving a God *so good!* whose love for us knows no bounds, who has loved us *first*, and to *such a degree*, as to give even his own beloved Son to be our Redeemer; and who has prepared for us hereafter a kingdom of inconceivable happiness, where he will give *himself* to be our eternal recompense, if only we will *love* him.

Oh! reflect, then, my Brethren, frequently and seriously, upon all these pressing motives, which you have, to give your affections to God; and your hearts cannot but be powerfully moved to love him.

POINT II.
The happiness
of loving God.

And to love him is, in the second place, your greatest happiness, even in this life; for, when the love of God is once infused into the heart, it brings with it *innumerable advantages*. It sweetens all the crosses and afflictions of life; and renders the duties of Religion both sweet and easy.

Reflecting on this sweetness and efficacy of divine love, St. Augustine exclaims : " Love God, and do what thou wilt ! " Yes, my Brethren, "*Love God*," and then the dispositions of your heart will be such, that you will be prepared to undergo any torment, to suffer any loss or privation, rather than transgress the laws of your Creator ;—" *Love God*," and then your heart will utterly despise the perishable goods and transitory pleasures of this short life ; since all your satisfaction will be in the love and service of *Him*, who, in the language of the beloved Disciple, is charity itself, and who has died for charity (1 *John* iv. 8, 16) ;—" *Love God*," and then you will anticipate, in some measure, that happy inability of incurring the divine displeasure, which constitutes no small portion of the felicity of the Angels and Saints ;—" *Love God*," and then, after having been united to him here by the practice of this virtue, you will go to be more closely united to him hereafter in his kingdom, where you will love and enjoy him *perfectly* and *for ever*.

O blessed treasure of divine Love ! how truly rich are they that possess thee ! The cruel torments of the rack, the excruciating tortures of the gridiron, are by thee converted into subjects of joy and exultation ! The rugged and thorny path of the cross thou bestrewest with roses of delights ! How happy, then—how supremely happy are those souls that are possessed of this amiable, this life-giving virtue—this *most precious of all the gifts of God* !

Oh! pray then, my Brethren, incessantly and most fervently to the God of infinite Charity, beseeching him that he would enkindle in your hearts this sacred fire of his love—that henceforth every moment of your lives may be an act of adoration, praise, and love; and that your love (thus once enkindled) may, every day, more and more abound, until it be absorbed in the full possession of its object. Thus will you begin to do *THAT now here upon earth*, which will have to be your delightful occupation for all eternity in heaven, if you should be so happy as to be admitted hereafter into that heavenly kingdom, whose blessed inhabitants are for ever singing to their God the Canticles of praise, thanksgiving, and love.

SERMON XLVII.

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

“And the second is like to this : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Mt. xxii. 39.)

The entire Law of God centres in these two Commandments of Love ; or rather we should say, it centres in the first of them : for the second is only a branch of the first ; because it is for the love of God, that we are to love also our neighbour. And it is for this reason, that our blessed Redeemer says : “The second is like to this ;” or, in other words, the love of our neighbour is a necessary part of our love of God. Indeed, so essential to the love of God, is the love of one another, that, “if any man say : I love God, but without loving his brother,” St. John assures us, that “that man is a liar.” For “this Commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother.” (1 John iv. 20, 21.)

Our blessed Redeemer frequently, in the Gospel, urges upon our constant attention the duty of brotherly love; and so much stress does he lay upon this precept, that he has appointed its observance to be the distinguishing mark, whereby his followers are to be known from the rest of mankind: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples: if you have love one for another." (*John* xiii. 35.) And, from his vehement desire that we should practise this necessary virtue, thrice before his passion did he beseech his heavenly Father to bestow it upon us: he prayed, that we might be all united together in the bond of charity—that we might be one, as the Father and He are one. (*John* xvii.) St. Paul, indeed, goes so far as to say, that "All the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and he spoke by inspiration from God. (*Rom.* xiii. 9.)

You see, then, my Brethren, the importance and necessity of complying with this precept of fraternal charity. I will now proceed to explain to you, the *Motives* which should regulate us in the exercise of brotherly love; and also the *Qualities* of that love which is required of us.

POINT I. The motives of Fraternal Charity.	Your Charity must spring from pure and religious motives; as we learn from those words of Christ wherein he proposes himself to us for our Model: "This is my commandment; that you love one another, as I have loved you." (<i>John</i> xv. 12.)
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Now, what are the motives which induced the Son of God to love us; and to love us so tenderly, as even to lay down his life for our sake? It could not be from any advantage he hoped to receive from men in return for his love: for he is the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth—the God of infinite power and Majesty; to whom the whole creation is subject; and before whom man is but mere dust and ashes. No, my Brethren; he loved us entirely for our own advantage; not induced by any merit on our part, nor any claim which we could have to his love; but, on the contrary, beholding the unhappy condition to which sin had reduced us—that we were “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (*Apoc.* iii. 17), he was moved with compassion for our miseries; and, from an astonishing effect of his goodness and mercy, he gave himself to be our Redeemer. He loved us, then, purely to promote our eternal happiness; and whatever blessings, corporal or spiritual, he conferred upon man, were all directed to this end.

His charity, moreover, was not confined to particular individuals—not to the chosen few, who, leaving all things to follow him, had dedicated themselves to his service; but it was extended to all mankind, even to his bitterest enemies; so much so, that, when he was expiring under the most cruel torments, which their active malice could inflict; as if regardless of all that he was suffering from their hands, he pleaded their cause, in the most tender manner, to his heavenly Father, saying:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (*Lk.* xxiii. 34.)

Oh! my beloved Brethren, place continually before your eyes this divine Model; and make his example the frequent subject of your meditation, that it may act as a powerful stimulus to make you love your neighbour for the sake of him, who has loved you so tenderly; that it may serve to purify your motives, in the exercise of charity towards your brethren; and may direct you to have principally in view the promoting of their eternal welfare.

POINT II. The qualities of Fraternal Charity.	Having considered the Motives which should direct our charity, we will now proceed to examine its essential qualities. For you must not imagine, that we practise this virtue by a mere speculative or superficial charity. When we are commanded to love our neighbour <i>as ourselves</i>, it is a sincere and effective charity that is required of us—a charity proceeding from the heart, and influencing our actions: “My little children, (says St. John,) let us not love in word, nor in tongue; but in deed, and in truth.” (<i>1 John</i> iii. 18.)
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That we may not deceive our own hearts in this important point, by flattering ourselves that we are actuated by a true love of our neighbour, whilst, in truth, our charity is confined to mere empty professions, and lasts no longer than the words which express it; our divine Redeemer has laid down a

principle—an unerring rule, whereby we may secure ourselves, infallibly, from this fatal delusion; and that is, to measure our love for our neighbour, by that love which we bear towards ourselves. For, he says not barely: “Thou shalt *love* thy neighbour;” but: “Thou shalt love him, *as thyself*.”

In order, therefore, to discover, whether our charity is such as Almighty God demands of us, we must examine closely into our own hearts, and consider what are the qualities of that love which we have for ourselves; and then, comparing it with that which we exercise towards others, we should see whether we can discover in the latter, those qualities which the former possesses. This is the best, the surest rule whereby to judge, whether, in our conduct towards others, we are actuated by true, genuine charity.

Now, what is the love which we bear towards ourselves? what are its characters? how sincere, how constant, how active! How tender are we in our own regard! how sensibly do we feel whatever is opposed to our happiness! If, for example, divine providence visits us with afflictions; and those persons, whom we know to be acquainted with our distress, (instead of treating us with kindness, and showing for us that compassion which self-love tells us our afflictions cannot fail to excite,) load us with reproaches, treat us with harshness and severity, or even merely appear indifferent in our regard; what, my Brethren, are our feelings under these circumstances? in what

features does our natural tenderness for ourselves represent such unfeeling conduct? does not this aggravate, and sometimes even more than double the weight of sorrow that afflicts us? What, then, ought to be our conduct towards our fellow-creatures in like circumstances?

If you will but examine, impartially, your own hearts, and regulate your feelings and your actions towards your neighbour, by what you expect his to be towards you; how will your hearts melt into tenderness and compassion, when, giving expression to his feelings, he makes known to you the source of his distress! Nor will you confine your charity to mere empty expressions of sympathy and compassion; but you will endeavour to afford the distressed every assistance and consolation, which it is in your power to impart. For, your works will be such as to testify, that, like the Apostle of the Gentiles who became all things to all men, you are not insensible to the sufferings of the afflicted; but that you share with them in their distresses.

Therefore, my Brethren, consult your own hearts; and, as it dictates what the conduct of others should be towards you, such let yours invariably be towards them. And then the whole body of your actions will be influenced and guided by charity—they will bear upon them the characters of kindness, of compassion, of concern for your fellow-creatures; and it is in these characters, and in the happy effects resulting from them, that we may know where true charity resides.

Thus, my Brethren, we cannot have a surer principle to guide us, in the fulfilment of the great precept of charity, than to cast our eyes upon ourselves, and consider well the motions of our own interior. For, by doing this, we shall manifest in our conduct that true charity, which Christ has declared to be characteristic of his disciples: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples: if you have love one for another."

And although in this or that particular individual, we may see but little to recommend him to our love, but rather the contrary qualities; nevertheless, let us love him for the sake of him who has commanded it, and who, in this respect, has put our neighbour in place of himself, teaching us that what we do to one another, for his sake, he considers as done to himself; and that, when the last day shall arrive, as our conduct has been towards others, so he will treat each of us respectively: "Judge not, and you shall not be judged;—condemn not, and you shall not be condemned;—forgive, and you shall be forgiven;—give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom; for with the same measure that you mete withal, it shall be measured to you again." (*Lk. vi. 37.*)

Therefore, my Brethren, let sincere fraternal charity be our universal practice—let us show ourselves to be true disciples of our divine Master, by loving our neighbour *as we love ourselves*, and *as Christ has loved us*.

SERMON XLVIII.

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE POWER OF FORGIVING SINS.

“But that you may know, that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins : Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitudes, seeing it, glorified God who had given such power to men.”
 (Matt. ix. 6, 7, 8.)

POINT I.

Christ, as man,
 had the power
 to forgive sins.

These words, which I have selected from the Gospel of the present Sunday, represent to us Jesus Christ working a miracle, in order to prove that he, as

Man, had “power on earth to forgive sins :” “But that you may know, that the *Son of Man* hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then he said to the man sick of the palsy :) Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into

his house." Observe, this was in answer to the objection which the Jews had made in their hearts, that no one can forgive sins, but God alone. But, after this miracle, they were forced to recognise that he possessed this power, even as *Man* : "And the multitudes, seeing it (the miracle proving his power to forgive sins), feared and glorified God, who had given such power to *men*." Again, he said on another occasion : "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." (*Mt.* xxviii. 18.) Here he speaks of himself *as man* ; because, as God, he had all power of himself, without its being given to him. All power, therefore, was given to him, as man ; and consequently, the power of forgiving sins.

POINT II.
Christ gave the
same power to
his Church.

Now, this same power, which he had thus received and exercised as man, he gave to his Apostles, after his Resurrection ; and through them, he gave it to their successors in the Ministry : "Peace be to you : As the Father hath sent me, I also send you, (that is, invested with the same power :) When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them : Receive ye the Holy Ghost : Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." (*John* xx. 21, 22, 23.) God alone can forgive sins, in his own name, and by his own power ; but he can (if he pleases) commission others to do it in his name and by his authority, as his ministers or agents ; as, in fact, he has commissioned his Apostles and their successors.

POINT III.
The means of
applying to us
the Effects of
this power.

The means, whereby the effects
of this power are to be applied to
our soul, are the Sacraments of
Baptism ~~and Penance~~.

1. In Baptism, we obtain the
pardon of original sin, and of all
the sins we have committed up to that time ; and
are put in the happy state of sanctifying grace.

2. But if, after Baptism, we fall again into
mortal sin, the only means by which we can then
obtain the exercise of this power of forgiving sins—
the only means by which we can obtain a reconcili-
ation with our offended God, is the ~~Sacrament of~~
~~Penance~~ : we must necessarily apply to those Pas-
tors of Christ's Church, with whom, as St. Paul
says (2 Cor. v. 18, 19), he hath left the ministry
of this reconciliation ; we must apply, by a sincere
confession, ~~to the Sacrament of Penance~~.

POINT IV. The various and numerous sects
Confession is of Protestants, amongst whom we
necessary and live, deceived by the spirit of error,
obligatory. deny the necessity of Confession :
they call it a new doctrine, and
listening to the dictates of their pride, they say :
“ I will never submit to confess my sins to a man ;
I will confess them to God alone.” But is Confes-
sion a new doctrine ? is it the invention of men ?
For an answer to this question, let them read the
Fifth Chapter of the Book of Numbers : “ And the
Lord spoke to Moses, saying : Say to the children

of Israel : When a man or woman shall have committed any of all the sins that men are wont to commit, and by negligence shall have transgressed the commandments of the Lord, and offended ; they shall confess their sin, and restore the principal itself, and the fifth part over and above, to him against whom they have sinned." A later Scripture admonishes the people of this command, and exhorts them to fulfil it : " For thy soul be not ashamed to say the truth ; be not ashamed to confess thy sins ; but submit not thyself to every man for sin." (*Ecclus.* iv. 24, 31.) " He that hideth his sins, shall not prosper ; but he that shall confess and forsake them, shall obtain mercy." (*Prov.* xxviii. 13.) And in the New Testament we read, that they, who were moved to repentance by the preaching of the Baptist, accompanied their repentance with a confession of their sins : " And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the desert of Judea, and saying : ~~Repentance~~ ; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand : Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country about the Jordan, *confessing their sins.*" (*Mt.* iii. 1, 2, 5, 6.) We read also how Jesus Christ, establishing his Church upon earth, appointed in it a body of ministers, and made them judges of the consciences of men, with power to forgive or retain sins, in his name and by his authority : " Receive ye the Holy Ghost : Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them ; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (*John* xx. 22, 23.) And we find one of his Apostles referring to this means of

pardon, when he says : “ If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquities.” (1 *John* i. 8, 9.)

In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, we find another Apostle referring to this same means of pardon, as being necessary for reconciling the sinner with his offended God. The words of St. Paul are these : “ God hath reconciled us to himself by Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. For God indeed was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and he hath placed in us the word of reconciliation (the words of absolution). For Christ therefore we are Ambassadors.” (2 *Cor.* v. 18, 19, 20.) If then, we would have part in this reconciliation, we must apply to those to whom alone God has given the ministry of it.

Thus, then, I have shown, that, throughout the whole of Scripture, Confession is taught to be a necessary means of reconciling the sinner with God. And its necessity having been thus taught by the Apostles, we find it practised accordingly by the first Christians.

In the 19th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we find, that, on one occasion, St. Paul continued for two years at Ephesus, preaching and instructing the people. “ And the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many of them that believed, came *confessing and declaring their deeds*. And many of them who had followed curious arts, brought together their books, and burnt them before all ; and counting the price of them, they found the money

to be fifty thousand pieces of silver." (*Acts* xix. 18, 19.) Here you see how confession was practised in the Church, during the Apostles' time, and in consequence of their teaching. And as they, who possessed bad books, were obliged to destroy them ; so does every Confessor feel it to be his duty to require his penitents to destroy bad books (if they have any), to remove all immediate occasions of sin, and to make reparation for the injustices which they may have committed.

This, then, being the doctrine and practice of the true Church of Christ, we see the necessity of practising the same, if we would obtain the beneficial effects of that power of forgiving sins, which Christ gave to his Church. For, if we confess our sins with proper dispositions, God will pardon us, as St. John assures us ; but if we will not confess, then God will not pardon us ; because we neglect the means of pardon which he has appointed for us.

But will they, who thus refuse Confession, be able to escape it? No, they must confess, sooner or later : this is a confusion—a humiliation required by God of every sinner, and none can possibly escape it.

For we must all appear in the valley of Josaphat, to be judged according to our works. They who confess now with proper dispositions, and receive absolution, are pardoned, and will not have to confess then. But they who now refuse to submit to the humiliation of confessing to one single individual, bound to an entire and perpetual secrecy, will be

forced then to make a general Confession of their whole lives ; and to make it publicly before all their relations and acquaintances—before the whole world. And to whom will they have to make this public general confession ? will they have to make it to Christ only ? will he sit alone on the judgment seat ? No, certainly not ; for Christ himself says : “ Amen I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of his Majesty, *you also* shall sit on twelve seats *judging* the twelve tribes of Israel.” (*Mt. xix. 28.*) And so St. Paul also declares ; for, when writing to the Corinthians, he says to them : “ Know you not that the Saints shall judge this world ? Know you not that we shall judge angels ? ” (*1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.*)

There is, then, no possibility of escaping from the judgment of Christ's Church. The Ministers of his Church have been appointed to be the judges of men's consciences ; and every Christian *must* confess, sooner or later, to those appointed judges. Oh ! what a downfall then to that soul-destroying pride, which leads so many of our poor deluded fellow-countrymen to rebel against Christ and his Church !

Oh ! how will they then wish, that they had humbled themselves in time—that, in the character of humble penitents, they had presented themselves before the tribunal of mercy, which Christ has erected in his Church ; that thereby they might have escaped condemnation, when forced to stand before that same tribunal, sitting *then* with Christ as the tribunal of justice.

And *you*, my Brethren, how will you then wish, that you had been more frequent in approaching to the Sacrament of Penance! and more diligent and careful in your preparation for it! Oh! enter now seriously into yourselves: consider the terrible consequences of dying in sin; and resolve—firmly and practically resolve, that henceforth, whenever you are conscious of being in a state of mortal sin, you will hasten to the tribunal of penance, in order that you may recover the grace of God, and may be restored to a state of perfect reconciliation with him; lest, if you should delay your repentance by putting it off from day to day, his wrath come upon you on a sudden, and in the day of vengeance he destroy you. (*Ecclus.* v. 8, 9.)

This whole sermon to be
taken even from Radio

SERMON XLIX.

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE TORMENTS OF HELL.

“Then the King said to the waiters : Bind his hands and his feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. xxii. 13.)

Almighty God has prepared for man a banquet of eternal happiness, in the kingdom of heaven. And he has sent (and still continues to send) his ministers, to induce as many as they can to come to his heavenly banquet. The way, by which you are to arrive at the happiness prepared for you, is to lay aside all over-solicitude for temporal affairs, and attend, in the first place, to the service of God.

But alas! how many are there, who, refusing to listen to the exhortations of God's ministers, neglect their religious duties, in order to give themselves up to earthly pursuits—to their farm, their merchandise, or their pleasures? The sad consequence of this is, that, when any one of these appears before God after death, not having on the wedding garment of sanctifying grace, he is found unworthy of being admitted to that heavenly banquet to which he has been invited; so that Jesus Christ, being angry, says to the ministers of his justice: "Bind his hands and his feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This, my Brethren, is a most awful and alarming subject; because it is not a few individuals only, that will be doomed to this perpetual "weeping and gnashing of teeth;" for our blessed Lord assures us, that the greater part of mankind will be of the number of the reprobate: "For many (he says) are called, but few are chosen." (*Mt. xxii. 14.*) All of us, therefore, have reason to fear for ourselves; because this awful subject concerns every one of us. Let us, then, ponder well, this day, the evils—the extreme evils, to which we expose ourselves, whenever we neglect our duty to God.

The sufferings of the wicked, when "cast into that exterior darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth," are expressed in that terrible sentence which will be pronounced over them at the last day: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlast-

ing fire." (*Mt. xxv. 41.*) Here we see, in the first place, that they are banished from God's presence, which is called the *pain of Loss*;—but, in the second place, that they do not depart from his presence, without taking with them his terrible curse, which devotes them to the most excruciating tortures in devouring flames: this is called the *pain of Sense*;—and, lastly, that all these excruciating torments are to last *for ever*. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

POINT I. In the first place, then, the wicked
 The pain are banished eternally from God.
 of Loss. Would, my Brethren, that I could
 make you truly sensible of the greatness of your loss, when you lose your God for ever! This loss of God is the greatest of all the punishments of hell; and yet it is the one which the sinner, while he is in this world, thinks the least of: he grieves and afflicts himself for temporal losses; whilst he seems to care but little, when he has lost his God by sin! Now, why is this; but because earthly things take up the place of God in his heart; and because in them he seeks his happiness, instead of seeking it in God?

Man is born with a strong propensity to seek his own happiness; and, if directed aright, this propensity would bring him to the enjoyment of his God in a happy eternity. But, allowing himself to be blinded and deluded by his corrupt nature, he is led to seek his happiness in creatures; and though

daily experience plainly shows him, that he is seeking happiness where it cannot be found ; yet, whenever created objects present to him their delusive charms, he yields to the impulse of passion—with insatiable hand he catches at the imaginary good ; but, like a phantom, it eludes his eager grasp. After a thousand disappointments, wearied and fatigued by his fruitless pursuit, death at length overtakes him—he enters into eternity, where the objects of passion possess no attracting charm.

Here his delusion ceases—his eyes are opened ; and he discovers, now it is too late, wherein true happiness really consists. God appears before him in all the splendours of his glory. The sinner sees the greatness of his loss ; he feels that his heart was made for God alone ; and that he necessarily tends towards him, with all the ardour and vehemence of which his soul is capable. But, far from arriving at the object which he labours so vehemently to possess, he feels himself banished eternally from his God ; he sees a wall of separation raised up between himself and his sovereign good ; and, whilst he incessantly tends towards his God with the most violent efforts of his soul, from which he is doomed never to desist, he feels an invisible hand always repelling him with equal violence. At every instant, during a long eternity, he is destined to renew his fruitless efforts—to exhaust and torment himself, in straining after what he knows he can never obtain : and thus he is left to languish in pangs of the

deepest distress ; and to pine away, eternally, in all the agonies of despair !

Thus, in the bitterness of his soul, does he deplore his infinite loss ; bursting forth into the wildest transports of grief and fury ; and venting the most dreadful imprecations both against God and himself !

POINT II. Such, my Brethren, is the eternal
The pain occupation of the reprobate in hell :
of Sense. and can any situation be conceived
 more distressing ? But this is not all :

God arms his creatures to be the ministers of his vengeance against the wicked : “ They shall have their portion (he says) in the pool burning with fire and brimstone : and the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever ; neither have they rest day nor night.” (*Apoc.* xx. 9, 14 ; xiv. 10, 11.)

This fire is an instrument of vengeance, enkindled for the punishment of impenitent sinners, by an offended God, who exercises his Almighty Power in giving violence to its flames ! Alas ! who can conceive the tortures—the insupportable tortures, which the reprobate must feel, when an avenging God exerts his infinite power to chastise them ! When HE who is Omnipotent—HE who could create heaven and earth out of nothing by his only word, and who could as easily reduce them again to nothing,—when HE, before whom all the nations of the earth are but as a leaf, that is carried away with

the wind ;—when HE, the great God of heaven, rising up in vengeance against his rebellious creatures, lifts his hand to strike, how severe must be the blow ! Oh ! what a fearful thing it must be for the sinner, when he thus falls into the hands of the living God ! (*Heb.* x. 30, 31.)

For the violence of those eternal flames is inconceivable : they penetrate every part of the body ; search into the very marrow of the bones, make the blood actually boil within the veins, and reach even to the inmost recesses of the soul ! What the poor sinner suffers in the midst of these searching flames, it is beyond the power of language to express, or of the mind to conceive. His melancholy hours are eternally employed in weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. In agonies of grief, his tears cease not to flow day and night ; but those tears bring him no consolation ; they only serve to make him feel more keenly the violence of the flames that torment him. Ah ! how truly (in the words of the Psalmist) “have the sorrows of hell encompassed him !” (*Psa.* xvii. 6.)

POINT III. There is no pain in this life, without intervals of ease and cessation ; and those intervals afford us consolation in our greatest sufferings. But, in hell, there is no cessation : its torments are always the same, always excessive, and without the least hope that there will ever be the slightest abatement.

In this extremity of misery, the poor sinner would be glad if he could put an end to his existence : but no ; he must live for ever : he is immortal ; his torments must be eternal ; and the thought of this eternity, continually recurring to his mind, overwhelms his soul with unspeakable grief. Always groaning under the severity of present sufferings, he extends his melancholy thoughts to the future, to discover, if possible, in the gloomy regions of futurity, some distant period which may put an end to his misery. But the sad prospect, which invariably presents itself to his view, is *Eternity*—a *miserable Eternity* !

To endure at once all the torments that can be endured, and in the greatest degree of rigour with which they can be inflicted ; to feel them in all their severity at every instant ; and to reflect, at the same time, that every one of these pains is eternal, is a degree of misery which it is impossible to express or conceive !

My Brethren, let us reflect occasionally upon these awful truths, while our reflections may be of advantage to our souls : let us consider by what means we may escape being condemned to this miserable eternity, where the wicked are forced to drink so deeply of the cup of divine vengeance.

To escape this extreme misery, the state of grace is necessary. ^{Repent} ~~Do penance~~, therefore, ~~for~~ your sins ; and make use of those means, which Religion affords, to recover the grace of God, and to preserve it during the remainder of your lives. Approach

frequently therefore to the Sacraments; and endeavour to be regular in discharging faithfully all the duties of a good Christian.

And whenever you find yourselves tempted to sin, think seriously on the torments of sinners in hell—say to yourselves: “Shall I condemn myself to everlasting misery in the flames of hell, for the sake of a moment’s pleasure—for the sake of this paltry enjoyment?” Such a reflection cannot but rouse you to exertion, and enable you to resist the temptation with a firm determination: and thus it will serve as an effectual means of preserving you from falling into those eternal flames, according to these words of the Wise-Man: “Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.” (*Ecclus. vii. 40.*)

SERMON L.

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION.

"See therefore how you walk circumspectly ; not as unwise, but as wise ; redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. v. 15, 16.)

When we consider *seriously* the shortness and uncertainty of human life ; that we must soon leave this world, and every thing in it, in order to go into eternity ; that, ~~the moment we shall~~ have entered into eternity, we shall be placed at the bar of divine justice to answer for our conduct, where nothing in this world can afford us the least assistance—when we consider all this seriously and attentively, we cannot but *feel* the importance and necessity of "walking circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise,

redeeming the time" which we have neglected to employ in preparing ourselves to meet our God.

But, when that awful period, to which I have just referred, shall be near at hand—when we shall be lying on the bed of sickness, and shall there reflect, that, in a few days, or perhaps in a few hours, either the extreme of happiness, or the extreme of misery, is to become our everlasting portion ; oh ! then shall we not only feel that importance and necessity, but begin to *grieve* most bitterly, that we have neglected to regulate our conduct according to the divine admonition of this day's Epistle.

In order that *you*, my Brethren, may not have then any real cause for bitter lamentations of this kind, let me entreat you to enter seriously into yourselves now, and to consider attentively the great importance of salvation, and the fatal consequences of neglecting it.

POINT I.

Of all affairs
our salvation
is the most
important.

Nothing can serve to show the great Importance of Salvation so much, as the consideration of what God has done to promote it. Religion teaches, that God has created us, and placed us here, only that

we might know him, and love him, and serve him in this life ; and might thereby render ourselves deserving of eternal happiness in the life to come : this is one of the first truths you were taught. In creating us, then, God had in view our eternal happiness : it was for this end that he furnished us

with reason capable of knowing him, with a heart capable of loving him, and with such faculties of body and soul, as render us capable of serving him. And when, by sin, we had forfeited for ever that eternal happiness, for which we were created ; in order to restore it to us God sent down from heaven, not one of the Angels or Archangels, not one of the Cherubim or Seraphim, that surround his throne ; but his only-begotten Son, the dearest object of his eternal love. And this beloved Son of God, (who is himself God, equal to the Father,) after a life of labours and sufferings endured for our salvation, offered himself in sacrifice for us on the Cross, that he might make full atonement for our guilt, and might thereby re-open to us the gates of the kingdom of heaven.

Oh ! how clearly do we see the great value which God sets on our salvation, when we thus consider how much he has done to promote it ! And ought not we, my Brethren, to value it at the same rate ? ought not we to show, that we take a similar interest in this important affair—an affair which concerns ourselves only, and on the failure or success of which depends our happiness or misery for eternity ?

But instead of taking a proper interest in this most important of all affairs, do not the lives of the greater part of mankind rather testify, that they attach much more importance to their temporal, than to their eternal welfare ; seeing that they do so much for the one, and so very little for the other. And yet, after all, what are earthly pursuits and earthly

advantages, when compared with your salvation ? For you may, in reality, do without riches, without the comforts and conveniences of life ; because these things are not necessary for your real happiness : but you cannot do without saving your soul ; because salvation is the only blessing, which will remain with you after death ; the only one which is essentially necessary for your real and eternal happiness. Whatever you may possess or enjoy during life, you can carry nothing with you beyond the grave, you must leave it all behind. If, therefore, you lose your soul, which alone will remain to you then, you lose your all, and you lose it irrevocably and for ever ! For there will be nothing then, that you can give in exchange for your soul.

POINT II.

Consequences
of neglecting
our salvation.

Oh ! could you interrogate those ambitious heroes, whose fame heretofore made so much noise in the world ; or those lovers of the mammon of iniquity, who were admired by all that knew them, for the abundance of their earthly possessions ; or those dissipated worldings, who sought after earthly and carnal gratifications, as the chief objects of their pursuit—could you but ask any of those unhappy souls what they now think of the honours, riches, and pleasures, which, during life, they laboured so much to acquire ; oh ! how instructive, how strikingly impressive would be the answers, which, from the midst of their torments, they would give !

What is poor Lazarus the worse now for having led a life of poverty and affliction—for having been reduced to such a state of want, as to crave even the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table? what is he the worse for all this, now that he is in paradise, enjoying the reward of his patient suffering? And what is that rich man the better, for having been clothed in purple and fine linen, and for having feasted sumptuously every day? what the better is he for all his riches and earthly comforts, now that he is buried in hell? (*Lk. xvi.*) Oh! if he could but return to this world to live again; instead of being the rich man, as he was, how much would he prefer to be the poor, the destitute, the neglected Lazarus! instead of receiving, as he did, good things in his lifetime, how content would he be to receive, like Lazarus, evil things for a few short years; that so he might afterwards be comforted in Abraham's bosom, instead of tormented, as he is, in those flames! Oh! how forcibly does that rich man feel, and all the rest of unhappy souls who are condemned with him to everlasting misery—how forcibly do they now feel the vanity and emptiness of all earthly things! how bitterly do they now lament, that, for the sake of these things, they neglected their salvation and have rendered themselves miserable for a never-ending eternity.

If you, my Brethren, like them, neglect your salvation, whereon depends your happiness or your misery for all eternity, oh! where is your faith? where is your reason? And must it not be said,

that you *do* neglect it, unless you make use of the means of salvation, which God, in his goodness, has provided for you ? For is it not evident, that you are neglecting your salvation, if you do not attend to the great duty of prayer, without which you cannot expect to receive the assistances of heaven ? Or, if, instead of spending sufficient time in religious exercises on Sundays and Holidays, you consider it enough merely to hear ~~Mass~~ on those days ; staying away from the Evening Services, even when you might very easily attend ? Or, if, far from being regular in approaching frequently to the holy Sacraments ~~of Penance and~~ Communion, you are so very backward in this respect, that no entreaties of your Pastor can induce you to have recourse to these Sacraments more than once, or twice, or thrice in the year ; and some of you, perhaps, not even that ; although you know, that they are the most powerful means of grace which Jesus Christ has instituted in his Church ? Or, if you allow yourselves to be so entirely engaged with the things of this world, that you will not spare even a few minutes in the day, for spiritual reading, or serious reflection on the great truths of Religion ? Is not this neglecting the salvation of your souls ? It certainly cannot be called *labouring to save them*. Oh ! begin now at least, in good earnest, to be regular and diligent in performing all your religious duties. Imitate not the conduct of that multitude of unhappy Christians, who will scarcely do anything towards saving their souls, until some serious illness, or the fear of death,

forces them to it ; but begin this very day, for you have no certainty that another day will be allowed you. The Son of Man assures us, that he will come like a thief in the night. (*Apoc.* iii. 3.)

Begin now, therefore, to prepare for his coming, and keep yourselves always in readiness. Remember, that this life will quickly end, to be followed by eternity ; and whether that eternity will be for you an eternity of happiness, or an eternity of misery, your conduct during life must decide. Bear this truth constantly in mind ; and be firmly resolved never again to risk your eternal happiness, for the sake of any thing that this world can give.

XXI after Trinity

SERMON LI.

The Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE.

"Put ye on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil."
(Eph. vi. 11.)

"Man's life upon earth is a warfare" (*Job iii. 7*), which is not to end as long as we live: it is a warfare, not only against flesh and blood; but against devils, whose nature is spiritual,—whose malice against us is most vehement and active,—whose power is alarming,—whose deceits are ensnaring,—whose temptations are alluring, and too often fatal. Our wrestling, then, is not against flesh and blood only, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places. "Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist" in the hour of trial, "and to stand in all things perfect."

These enemies never cease from meditating our spiritual ruin : they attack us in every possible way ; at all times ; and in all places : so that no retirement or walls can afford us any security against their attempts.

Our enemy takes advantage of every kind of created object, and conceals himself under every possible appearance, to deceive us. His temptations are varied, according as different circumstances call for a different kind of stratagem. Some persons, for instance, are sorrowful and afflicted : in tempting these, satan assumes an air of compassion ;—others are cheerful and elated : with these he puts on gaiety and mirth ;—when he tempts those who are of a religious disposition, he usually “transforms himself into an angel of light,” to deceive them—to lead them to vice under the false appearance of virtue. (2 Cor. xi. 14.)

With reason, then, does St. Augustine ask : “How shall we be able to detect and escape all his snares ? who shall protect us from falling victims to his malice ?”

POINT I. We must put on the Armour of God.	We must fly, my Brethren, for refuge and protection to Almighty God : there is no safety, but under the shadow of his wings : we must “put on his armour,” if we would be enabled to “stand against the deceits of the devil.”
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We must, then, have recourse to God, by earnest and confiding prayer, and by the regular discharge of

all our religious duties, if we would find protection against the enemy. For, if we neglect our duties to God—if we pray but seldom, and without devotion; if we stay away from the Sacraments; and lead a life of tepidity and spiritual sloth; what else can we expect, but often to experience the effects of the devil's malice in all kinds of temptations, and the sad consequences of our own weakness in yielding to them? For, though God has promised to help us in the hour of need, yet he has promised this to such only as call upon him: though he has declared, that he will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength (1 Cor. x. 13); yet he has made this declaration in favour of those only who strive to serve him, and who implore his protection. If, then, we neglect his service; if we will not "put on his armour," which is our only defence; what wonder is it that we meet with temptations above our strength, and are frequently overcome?

POINT II.

WE must take
to ourselves the
Shield of Faith.

Besides this "putting on the armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil;" we must "take to ourselves also (as St. Paul tells us) the shield of faith, wherewith we may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one."

He who has a lively faith of the great and important truths of salvation, and who reflects frequently and seriously on that endless happiness or misery

which awaits him after death, will feel the necessity of exerting himself to escape the one, by labouring to gain the other. He will easily renounce the transitory and delusive pleasures of this world, when he reflects, that the eternal enjoyment of God is to be his everlasting recompense.

We daily see what wonderful effects are produced by the prospect of gaining some earthly possession or enjoyment; with what patience men go through great hardships; how easily they deny themselves their pleasures, and forego their rest, when they have their earthly prosperity in view. Now, a lively Faith will produce similar spiritual effects: it will animate us to fervour and diligence in our spiritual warfare, and enable us to support every difficulty that may stand in the way of our eternal happiness.

POINT III.

~~We~~ We must also take unto us the Sword of the Spirit.

We must arm ourselves, moreover, with "the word of God," which St. Paul calls "the sword of the Spirit." This, then, is a weapon which we are to employ, in order to put our enemy to

flight, when he attacks us. Thus, when our Lord was thrice attacked by satan, he put the tempter to flight, by quoting against him each time a passage of the word of God. Let us, then, make use of the same weapon: let us provide ourselves with a few suitable passages, which we may employ as occasion may require. Such, for example, as these:—

"Lord, save me, or I perish." (*Mt. viii. 25.*)

(*Lk. x. 16*); yet such deluded persons listen to their groundless fears, which are the suggestions of the devil, and these they obey and follow, rather than the directions of their Confessor! Thus it is that the enemy puts on the appearance of "an angel of light" to work our ruin. (*2 Cor. xi. 14.*)

This is all a delusion—a very great delusion—a very dangerous delusion: it is one which generally proves very injurious to virtue; and sometimes quite fatal.

The design of the enemy, in this delusion, is twofold: first to prevent us from advancing in piety and virtue, by leading us to neglect solid devotion, in order to lose our time in disputing with one's self about silly trifles; and, secondly, to force us to give up our duty, by making it appear as if the service of God produces nothing but trouble and dejection, instead of peace and consolation.

You are bound to strive against this delusion, by despising such groundless fears, and following the direction of your spiritual guide. The only effectual remedy is a perfect obedience to your Director: without this, every other remedy will be useless.

POINT V.

Why our life upon earth is a warfare.

In making man's life upon earth a continual warfare—in permitting temptations, Providence has an end in view; and that end is one of mercy and goodness towards us.

Frequent trials are the exercise of virtue: we are rendered more active by opposition: by seeing our

danger, and being made to feel it, we become sensible of our weakness, of our total dependance on God, and of the absolute necessity and obligation of imploring, at all times, his divine assistance. Were it not for being thus continually roused by temptation, we should be sure to fall away from our fervour, into a life of tepidity and sloth. For, we are too apt, like seamen, to sleep in a calm ; whereas, a storm makes us watchful, active, and laborious.

Let us not be discouraged, then, when we have to endure trials and temptations ; knowing that God so ordains for our good, and that he will assist and protect us, if we fly to him for refuge and help.

We must take care, indeed, to avoid all unnecessary occasions of temptation ; and we must never expose ourselves rashly to danger. Otherwise, we have reason to fear, that God will leave us to our own weakness, in punishment of our rashness : “He who loves the danger, shall perish in it.” (*Ecclus.* iii. 27.)

But when the temptation is not of our own seeking, we have every reason to place an entire confidence in God, who declares, that he “will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to resist” (1 *Cor.* x. 13) ; that, if we “cast all our care upon him, he will sustain us” (*Ps.* liv. 23 ; 1 *Pet.* v. 7) ; for that “his grace is sufficient for us.” (2 *Cor.* xii. 9.) Let us, then, run to him with the greatest confidence, like the Apostles in the storm : let us implore him to command the winds and waves of our temptation ; and he will not fail to afford relief. (*Mt.*

viii. 26, 27.) But if, for our further trial, he seem not to hear us, let us not lose confidence; but add still greater fervour to our supplications, and continue them, till we obtain our request: "If he make any delay, wait for him; for he shall surely come, and shall not be slack." (*Habac. ii. 3.*)

To be disturbed with endless temptations, is an uneasy life to one that seeks God. But the uneasiness is to self-love, which seeks ease and quiet; rather than to the love of God, which is content in being exercised. The next life, and not this, is the life of rest: while we are here, we must both fight and conquer, if we would be crowned hereafter. Let us, then, take courage: let us fight manfully; and let us persevere in this warfare to the end of our lives: so that, at our last hour, we may have the comfort of being able to say with St. Paul: "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course: and there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me." (*2 Tim. iv. 7.*)

*"I have not proved them" will begone
remains in your hands with the same
to the end as more early.*

*"Many a rude jest-wh. we have pined been
quick, then ceases to be so lightly from
now on who treats lightly the rights of a
winter, then wh. he is only passing to a
will be known." Knights' ~~travellers~~ to work
by Sepulchre from the life of. In all your
enjoyment, soul preserve strict discipline, place*

SERMON LII.

The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost.

ON HUMAN RESPECT.

“Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”
(Matt. xxii. 21.)

Of all the means which satan employs to destroy souls, scarcely is there one which he employs more frequently, and which answers his purpose better, than Human Respect. Thereby he works the ruin of innumerable Christians! They are willing to obey the call of virtue and truth, so long as the world is ignorant of their intention—so long as their piety and love of truth do not draw down upon them the frowns or sneers of their acquaintances; but, rather than expose themselves to the jeers or reproaches of a certain portion of their friends, they relinquish the path of virtue, either to pursue that of vice, or take part with error.

It is against these dangers and evil consequences of Human Respect, that I will endeavour now to guard you. I will show you, *First*, that a fear of the vain sneers of the world must not make you forsake the path of virtue, nor prevent you from entering upon it ;—*Secondly*, that, though you must act with civility towards others, yet the claims of civility must not be allowed to prevail over the strict claims which God has to your service ;—*Thirdly*, that the fear of being noticed by those of other religions must not make you ashamed of practising your own Religion in their presence, whenever circumstances require you so to practise it ;—and, *Lastly*, that the fear of what others will think, or say or do, must not prevent any one from embracing the true Religion, when convinced of its truth.

POINT I.

We must not neglect Duty through a fear of the world.

How commonly do we witness the fatal effects, which proceed from dreading the foolish sneers of the world ! Weak Christians are afraid of being laughed at for being pious ; and, to escape this, they neglect their duty to God. Let no such fears influence you, my Brethren, so as to prevent you from serving Almighty God. Give not to Cæsar, that is, to the world, more than belongs to it ; and withhold not from God what duty requires you to give to him. By acting otherwise, you would become guilty both of grievous sin, and of great folly. For what, in reality, is this world, which alarms

you so much ; which shames you out of your duty ; and causes you to offend your God ? The world, which you dread so much, is that large portion of mankind, who are enemies of the Cross of Christ ; who scoff at Religion, and look upon piety as folly ; who indulge their inclinations and passions ; and who are already condemned by the just judgment of God. This is the world : And to avoid *its* displeasure—to escape its censures, will you offend your God, and lose your soul ? Will you trample under foot the sacred blood of your Redeemer, prefer Barabbas before him, and, like the Jews, crucify again the Lord of glory, rather than lose Cæsar's friendship—rather than endure the disapprobation of a wicked world ?

A good Christian, who serves God in real earnest, acts in a very different manner. He shrinks not from his duty for fear of what the world may think or say of him ; he regards *its* opinions and observations, respecting his conduct, with the same indifference as he hears the wind blowing over his head. Act, my Brethren, in this manner ; pursue the path of virtue and truth with a steady perseverance, regardless of the censures or sentiments of a wicked world.

POINT II.
 Condescension
 to friends must
 yield to Duty.

But are we, then, to pay so little regard to the world, as not to act towards others with civility and condescension ? My Brethren, by the law of charity, we owe a respect and regard to every neighbour ; and a certain

degree of condescension in things that are indifferent, or in such as are good ; but, then, we owe to God an indispensable service ; and the claims of civility must not be allowed to prevail over the claim which God has to our service. Any condescension that goes against your duty to God, is unlawful ; whether it proceed from a desire to please men, and to gain their esteem ; or from a fear of their displeasure.

Observe then the distinction : You may pay a deference to your neighbours, and endeavour to please them by condescension, in matters that are indifferent ; but, whenever this condescension cannot be given without interfering with your duties to God, it is then no longer lawful : for, no consideration whatever can exempt you from the obligations, which you owe to the Almighty. However great may be the rank, or wealth, or power of the individual, or however dear to you the person, who solicits your compliance with his inclinations ; if that compliance interfere with your religious obligations, you are bound to refuse it : you must obey God before man.

If, therefore, your worldly friends request you to accompany them to amusements, which you know to be forbidden, or which you have every reason to believe will cause you to offend God ; you must deny their request : you are not to risk your salvation, for the sake of worldly friendship : you must part with a hand or an eye, sooner than expose yourselves to the immediate occasions of sin.

Your friends or companions may perhaps call you unfriendly or unsocial ; they may look upon your religious exactitude, as a mere scruple ; and may express their displeasure at your absence : still, you cannot comply with their wishes, when it would be at the expense of your duty to God ; for you must obey the divine commands, whatever may be the consequences.

POINT III.

We must not be ashamed of practising our religion before others.

Some Catholics there are, very far from acting in this manner, who, when in company with Protestants, or other dissenters, seem ashamed of the practices of their Religion. How many, for instance, are there, who are afraid

of being seen to make the Sign of the Cross—that venerable Sign, which, at the last day, will be the glory of God's Elect?—to bow their head at the Sacred Name of Jesus, at the mention of which, as St. Paul tells us, “Every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under earth” (*Phil. ii. 10*)?—and even to say their morning and night prayers, if they think they shall be noticed for so doing? And are there not some, who, without having a dispensation, will even eat meat on days when it is forbidden by the Church ; because they are ashamed of refusing ! Such weak ~~Catholics~~ as these, who allow themselves to be thus shamed out of their Religion, are unworthy of the name of Catholics, and are a disgrace to the Religion which

they profess. Let *your* conduct, my Brethren, be far otherwise: never crouch to Human Respect—never sacrifice your conscience to the sentiments or wishes of any one; but persevere boldly in the practice of your Religion, whatever others may say or think of your conduct.

POINT IV.

The fear of the world must not keep any one from the true Religion.

This fear of what others may think, or say, or do, has the effect, not unfrequently, of preventing persons from embracing the true Religion, when they are quite convinced of its truth. In the twelfth Chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, we read, that many of the Jews, who were completely convinced of the truth of our Saviour's doctrine, were prevented by Human Respect from becoming his Disciples: "Many of the chief men also (says the Evangelist) believed in him; but, because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, that they might not be cast out of the Synagogue: For they loved the glory of men, more than the glory of God." (*John* xii. 42, 43.)

How many are there of this character at the present day! how many, who are convinced of the truth of the Catholic Religion; but are so influenced by a dread of what their friends or acquaintances would say, that they cannot summon up sufficient courage to profess it! What will be the sentiments of these persons, when, lying on their death-bed, they call to mind these words of their Redeemer: "Whosoever

shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this sinful generation ; the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him, when he shall come in the glory of his Father" ? (*Mk.* viii. 38.) He that loveth Father, or Mother, or lands, or possessions, more than me, is not worthy of me ? (*Mt.* x. 37 ; xix. 29.) What must then be their feelings, when they reflect, that they must shortly appear before the judgment-seat of him, whose doctrines, during life, they have denied through worldly respects ? Oh ! how will they then wish, that, disregarding all earthly considerations, they had followed the dictates of their conscience—the dictates of truth !

Do therefore now, my Brethren, what you will then wish to have done ; do what conscience and Religion require from you ; follow the light of truth, and act according to what you know to be your duty ; in spite of any human consideration.

And if, by following this conduct, you incur the displeasure of your friends, or the censures and persecutions of the world, or are threatened with any temporal loss ; under these circumstances, "be glad and rejoice, because (as our blessed Redeemer declares) your reward is very great in heaven." (*Mt.* v. 12.)

By thus resolutely following truth and virtue, or the dictates of your conscience, you will gain the approbation of the Almighty in this life, and will ~~entitle yourselves to the possession of~~ eternal happiness in the next.

SERMON LIII.

The Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost.

ON THE PRACTICE OF CONSTANT PRAYER.

"But our conversation is in heaven." (Philip. iii. 20.)

After St. Paul had exhorted the Faithful to "be followers of him," and of all those who walked according to his example; he cautioned them with tears against imitating those unhappy Christians, who, instead of being followers of the Apostles, were habituated to such vices as would end in their own destruction. These, he says, "mind earthly things; but our conversation is heaven." If, then, we would "be followers" of the Apostles, *our* conversation also must be, not in earthly things, but in heaven—we, like them, must converse habitually with God in prayer.

To see that such was the constant practice of the Apostles, whom we are called upon to imitate; and that it was also the frequent subject of their in-

structions and exhortations to the Faithful, in accordance with what they had learned from our blessed Lord ; we have only to open the New Testament.

POINT I.

The constant
Practice and
Teaching of
the Apostles.

1. Thus, in the Acts of the Apostles, we find it related of them, that, as soon as our Lord had departed from them, by ascending into heaven, they returned, by his direction, to Jerusalem ; and, "going up into an upper room, they persevered with one mind in prayer, ~~with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren ;~~" and they continued thus "persevering in prayer" for ten successive days, until they received the Holy Ghost. (*Acts* i. 13, 14.) And it was their common practice, in the houses of the Faithful where they were stopping, to ascend into an upper chamber to pray. (*Acts* x. 9.)

When the administration of temporal things with regard to the care of the poor, put the Apostles in danger of being drawn off from constantly conversing with heaven ; they immediately chose out seven Deacons, and committed to them the administration of those temporal things, saying : "But we will give ourselves *continually to prayer*, and to the ministry of the word." (*Acts* vi. 4.)

2. Such is the example given us by the Apostles ; and their instructions are also in accordance with their example. For there is nothing which they urge upon the Faithful more frequently, nor with

greater earnestness, than the necessity of being assiduous in the great duty of prayer. Thus, St. Paul says: "Be instant in prayer." (*Col.* iv. 2.) "Pray without ceasing." (1 *Thes.* v. 17.) "In every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God." (*Philip.* iv. 6.) Again he says: "I desire therefore, *first of all*, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. I will therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands." (1 *Tim.* ii. 1, 3, 8.) And accordingly we find, that, when Peter was cast into prison, "prayer was made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him." (*Acts* xii. 5.) And it is related moreover of the first converts, that prayer was their constant practice: "They were persevering, says the sacred Text, in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers; continuing daily with one accord in the temple...praising God." (*Acts* ii. 42, 46, 47.) The faithful of those days, like the Apostles, were men of prayer, and therefore they could "walk in all the commandments of God without blame," so as to serve as an example to all future ages.

POINT II.
The Teaching
and Example
of Christ.

1. And in thus insisting upon the practice of constant prayer, the Apostles and first Christians were but following the teaching and example of their divine Master.

For he took every occasion of impressing this important duty upon the minds of his disciples, and of urging them to be diligent in practising it.

He lays it down as a general rule, "that we ought always to pray, and not to faint." (*Lk.* xviii. 1.) And thus he teaches, that prayer ought to be our constant practice.

When we wish to receive some favour or any blessing from God, he tells us that prayer is the sure means of obtaining it: "Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." (*John* xvi. 23, 24.)

If we would put the devil to flight, when he molests us with his temptations, our Lord teaches that prayer is both a necessary and an efficacious means: "This kind (that is, the unclean spirit) is not cast out but by prayer and fasting." (*Mt.* xvii. 20.)

Or if we would avoid falling a prey to temptations of any kind, whether proceeding from the devil, the world, or the flesh, he still points out the same means: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (*Mt.* xxvi. 41.)

If we would avert any evil that threatens us, or escape any impending danger, he directs us to fly to prayer for refuge and safety: "Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come." (*Lk.* xxi. 36.)

And indeed, not only this or that particular gift, but every thing whatsoever is promised to fervent

confiding prayer : "Therefore I say unto you : all things, whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive ; and they shall come unto you." (*Mk.* xi. 24.)

You see then how forcibly, and on how many occasions, his teaching urges upon us the great duty of frequent prayer.

2. And how many examples also does he give us, whereby this same duty is still more enforced ?

Our blessed Lord looked up to God *perpetually*, referring every thing to the glory of his heavenly Father ; he did not allow any occupation to withdraw his mind from conversing with heaven ; so that it may be truly said of him, that he "prayed without ceasing ;" and with the most sublime prayer.

At certain times, he withdrew from other occupations, in order to pray in a *more special manner*. And he did this both for our example, and also to enrich us with the graces of heaven. For, as he was to suffer for us, so he was likewise to pray for us. Thus, to Peter he said : "Simon, satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat : but I have prayed for thee." (*Lk.* xxii. 31.) His example shows what we have to do—what we have to imitate in him. For, if Christ prayed for us, ought not we to pray for ourselves and for others ?

And he not only prayed, but he prayed *much*, in this special manner. For in his private life, his prayers were long and frequent ; and even while he was working with his hands, his mind was engaged in prayer ;—and in his public life, he frequently

withdrew from men to pass a long time together in conversing with God ; as, when he retired into the desert for forty days ; and when he went into the mountain, alone, and passed the whole night in the prayer of God. (*Mt.* iv. ; *Lk.* vi. 12.) And this appears to have been his usual practice. It was his custom to turn aside from men, in order to treat with God, before affairs of greater importance ; as, before his temptations (*Mt.* iv),—before his Transfiguration (*Lk.* ix. 28, 29),—before choosing his twelve Apostles (*Lk.* vi. 12, 13),—before teaching them to pray (*Lk.* xi. 1),—before his Passion (*Lk.* xxii. 41 ; *John* xvii) ; and also after his public functions, and great miracles (*Mt.* xiv. 23) ;—he prayed, moreover, during the functions themselves ; as, in the multiplication of the loaves (*Mt.* xiv. 19 ; *John* vi. 11),—in raising Lazarus from the dead (*John* xi. 41, 42),—in instructing his disciples after their return from their mission (*Lk.* x. 21),—when certain gentiles came to adore on the festival day (*John* xii. 12, 27, 28),—and in the institution of the Blessed Eucharist. (*Mt.* xxvi. 26, 27, 30.)

Therefore, in imitation of his example, 1, “Set the Lord always in your sight” (*Ps.* xv. 8) ; and walk before him at all times (*Gen.* xvii. 1) ;—2, Every day give some stated times to prayer, and give them faithfully, entirely, and devoutly ;—3, In the midst of your employments, turn yourselves occasionally to God for a short time ;—4, Accustom yourselves to give to prayer your free and vacant time, and endeavour to repose sweetly in God.

POINT III.
Consequently,
we ought to be
diligent in this
great duty.

You see, my Brethren, how strongly the great duty of prayer is enforced, both by the teaching and example of Christ, and also by the teaching and example of his Apostles.

But even if this duty had not been thus so forcibly urged upon us, we should still have the strongest motives to be diligent in prayer, if we only considered our pressing wants of both soul and body ; for they are innumerable, and extreme. Why then do we not pray? why do we not pray incessantly and most earnestly? It would seem to be a matter of course that we should do so. For we know we can do nothing without God's grace (*John* xv. 5), and prayer is the means of obtaining his grace—a means which ought to *precede*, to *accompany*, and to *follow* all our actions. It is a proper preparation before the action,—it gives strength and vigour during the action,—and it enables us to have rest, and a peaceful conscience, after the action. And at all times it serves us to unite us to God, and to obtain for us his efficacious graces.

Endeavour therefore to acquire the habit of fervent, humble, confiding prayer ; and then, what graces, what merits, what spiritual blessings you will thereby obtain both for yourselves and others ?

SERMON LIV.

The Twenty-Fourth (or Last) Sunday
after Pentecost.

ON SCANDAL.

“Jesus said to his Disciples : When you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the holy place ; then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the Mountains : For there shall then be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now.”
(Matt. xxiv. 15, 16, 21.)

My Brethren, if we take the first words of the present Gospel in a spiritual sense, may we not say, that “the abomination of desolation” was never more visibly “standing in the holy place,” than at the present day ? For, by these words we may understand the impieties, profanations, and scandals, which are committed in the true Church of Christ ; and which draw down upon mankind the severest judgments of heaven.

As some virtues are of a higher order than others ; and will be more abundantly recompensed : so some vices have more of impiety in them ; and will be more severely punished. Amongst those virtues to which a greater reward is promised, we may reckon a zeal for the glory of God in the salvation of souls. It was in recompense of this, that Christ promised his Apostles, that they should “sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (*Mt. xix. 28.*) It is of this that the prophet Daniel says : “They who instruct many unto justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity.” (*Dan. xii. 3.*)

Judge, from this, what terrible punishments *they* have to expect, who, by their scandals, set up an “abomination of desolation” in the Church of God ! What fearful judgments may be apprehended as hanging over the heads of those sinners, who, instead of contributing, by their exhortations and good example, to the salvation of others ; do, on the contrary, by their bad example and enticements to sin, impiously lend assistance to the enemy of souls in working their destruction—in working the destruction of those souls, which are the price of the blood of Jesus Christ ! “Woe to the world, because of scandals : For it must needs be that scandals come ; but, nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh.” (*Mt. xviii. 7.*)

The enormity of the sin of scandal will be easily seen, if we consider it in these two points of view : *First*, as an act of the most atrocious impiety against Christ, in destroying those souls for whom he died ; and

secondly, as an irreparable injury against those who are the victims of this impiety, and consequently, as a great difficulty which it throws in the way of making adequate atonement during life.

POINT I. Scandal, as an act of impiety against Christ.	If the murder of Abel, which killed the body only, but sent the soul to heaven, drew down the judgments of heaven upon the unhappy murderer ; how terrible must be the judgments that will fall upon those who are guilty of the spiritual murder of souls, redeemed by the blood of Christ ! For, if the “voice of his brother’s blood cried to heaven for vengeance” against Cain who had spilt it (<i>Gen. iv. 10</i>); how much more the blood of Jesus Christ, shed upon the Cross for the salvation of man, but which scandalizing sinners cause to be shed in vain ! Will not his blood be “required at their hands” ? (<i>Exech. xxxiii. 8 ; Deut. xix. 21.</i>)
---	---

Will not Jesus Christ, at the last day, require them to give soul for soul ? “Thou wicked servant,” will he then say to them ; “behold those souls whom thou hast destroyed ! I spared neither labours, nor sufferings, to deliver them from sin and hell : I gave my life, even the last drop of my blood, for their salvation ; but thou hast rendered my labours, my sufferings, and my death *useless in their regard* ! Most dearly shalt thou pay for thy impious cruelty : double, treble shall be thy torment, according to the number of souls which thou hast destroyed ! For

now do I demand of thee an account of every one of those souls ! "I require their blood at thy hands." (*Ezech. xxxiii. 8 ; Deut. xix. 21.*)

We read, in the twenty-first Chapter of Exodus, that, when a man was found slain among the Jews, and it was not known who had committed the murder ; the ancients of the city should come, and wash their hands over the dead body, saying : "Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it." But, at the last day, when you see those souls that have been destroyed by your scandals, can you, in the presence of your Redeemer, wash your hands, and say : "My hands did not destroy the innocence of these souls, nor had I any part in it !" Oh ! my Brethren, how will the unhappy souls, on the left hand, cry out then for vengeance against you, if it is in consequence of your scandals, that they have to be condemned ! Oh ! how keenly will you then feel the truth of those words : "Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh !" (*Mt. xviii. 7.*)

POINT II.
Scandal, as
an injury to
its victims.

But, let us now consider the evil of scandal, as to the great difficulty which it throws in the way of making adequate atonement, during life, on account of the irreparable injuries which it causes to those who become its victims.

Religion teaches, that, to obtain pardon, we must not only repent, but repair as far as possible the injuries we have done. But how will you efface

those bad impressions which your scandals shall have caused in others? how will you stop that current of evils, which flows from scandal? how will you destroy that contagious infection, which scandal spreads far and wide? While the scandalizing sinner is craving pardon of God, many on earth, through his fault, are perhaps offending the God he is invoking! While he is imploring mercy, some in hell are perhaps crying out for vengeance against him! How can he make reparation for the loss of their souls? (*Example of Luther, of Henry VIII., &c.*)

Truly "Woe to the world, because of scandals;" but more especially "Woe to them by whom the scandal cometh! It were better for them, that a millstone should be hanged about their neck, and that they should be drowned in the depth of the sea" (*Mt. xviii. 6, 7*), than that they should have lived to give scandal!

Oh! my Brethren, how truly alarming is the case of those, who cause others to sin! And it is not only the case of those whose lives are *notoriously* wicked and immoral; but it is the case also, more or less, of all those who live in the neglect of their *ordinary Christian duties*; such as attending the Services of the Church on Sundays and Holidays; and approaching at proper times to the Sacraments: by neglecting these duties, you give scandal to others; and still greater is the scandal, and heavier the responsibility of those who, for want of taking due care of the souls that are under their charge, are the cause of their spiritual ruin.

Oh! my Brethren; *you* especially, whose conscience reproaches you with having been guilty of giving scandal; reflect on the great evil of leading others to sin; and on the terrible woe denounced against this destructive crime: "Woe to the world, because of scandals!" Let these awful words sink deeply into your minds, and make you look well to your external conduct, that, instead of giving scandal to others, you may edify them by good example: in future, "let your light shine before men, that, seeing your good works, they may be led to glorify your Father who is in heaven." (*Mt. v. 16.*) You may not perhaps be able to edify your neighbour, by your future good example, so far as to remedy the evils which your bad example may have caused: but do what you can, and God will regard your good will, your supplications, and your ~~works of~~ penance: his justice will be appeased; and "according to the multitude of his tender mercies" (*Ps. l. 3.*), he will pardon the evils you have done, as he pardoned the scandals of Magdalen, and of the penitent thief on the Cross. (*Lk. vii. 37 to 50; xxiii. 41, 43.*)

Capt^l Adams Clayburne
 Texas

underer himself can seldom stand in competition
with; for slander is a more cruel weapon than a
the wounds wh^{ch} the former gives are always
One method, indeed, there is of killing, & that the
most execrable of all wh^{ch} bears an exact analogy to
murder; that is poison: a means of revenge so base
that it was once wisely distinguished by our
murders in the peculiar severity of the punishment.
awful mischief done by slander & the baseness of the
wh^{ch} they are effected, their own circumstances
avert its atrocious quality; for it often proceeds
from a promise of reward, & it often promises itself a reward, while
the mind may propose a reward in the thought
procured the ruin & misery of another. Shak. has
described this vice when he says:

steals my purse, & 'tis trash; 'tis something, nothing
& mine, 'tis his, & hath been slave to 1000's;
he that flees from me my poor name,
one of that wh^{ch} not enriches him,
makes me poor indeed.

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obscure sun, stormy vex billow, deep
flower, or frost nip them, proovs chill, rain
from cloud sun breaks, ocean sleeps, peace
tranquil as lake, spring recalls with regret
that frost-kiss left for dead. - A had drunk
drop of bitterness that mingled malice & in
ise into this cup of meo up; & when he rec^d the de
tion, that he must prepare himself for death, he
he, who was weary of a life on blameless pilgrimage
xious to be released fr. its sufferings. - Adam,
says "Tradition! oh T! thou of the seraph tongue
that links 2 eyes the ancient & the young.
in the ascendant, thou art the decline. - It is

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*Leaves. Which = who in 1836. Catholics =
vers temp. Queen M. probly, up onto floor
His faith like a Camp assaulted by adv.
to a dark & stormy night, yet kept alight, to
many, now shed a bright radiance. (Can*

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TO THE
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WHO
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a storm ready to burst, was then, except
his life was encircled with the sun in
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broth & the pain, flower. In Hall's ap of the
cloth of G. (p. 616.) we read "The King's
baird in purple satin, baird with
the velvet, rich broided with f. & c. & c.
was baird flower, with the other sign
Francis." — Some years night-pale
the guilt was incurred with cast so dark
over 7th hopes & expectations in that period
re with is generally the golden age of life: the
may probly have been fraught with reputa
reput for 7th fault; possibly amendment in
vicious viii. rutilans rosa sine spina.
pots coins of King Henry, when married to
— Oh! the cloud ~~passed over~~ passed over
adverting the gathering storm. Unconscious
a cloud in PRE-EMINENT. proud over
blight he had been the means of exulting on
y bloom of life.
DIGNITY, SANCTITY, AND MERIT;
in the morning of life & bloom of beauty, was
weaned from the world. She had proved the
all its delusions & the deceitfulness. — A clear
stream, with THE EFFICACY night &
unwearied coup, as it rushes over its rocky
R. Perry's horoscope was OF HER ~~destiny~~ it was said
to sit in highest seat of imperial majesty,
all the small-POWERFUL in such
to in her hour. This she heard "look each
that when her mind INTERCESSION: her word must
to work, she wd reply "My hands are ordain
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mens. Vol. ii. part i. p. 206. C. Vol. V. p. 137 Notwith
early repugnance to touch a needle, his skill & ind
use because so remark? that there are obscur



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